

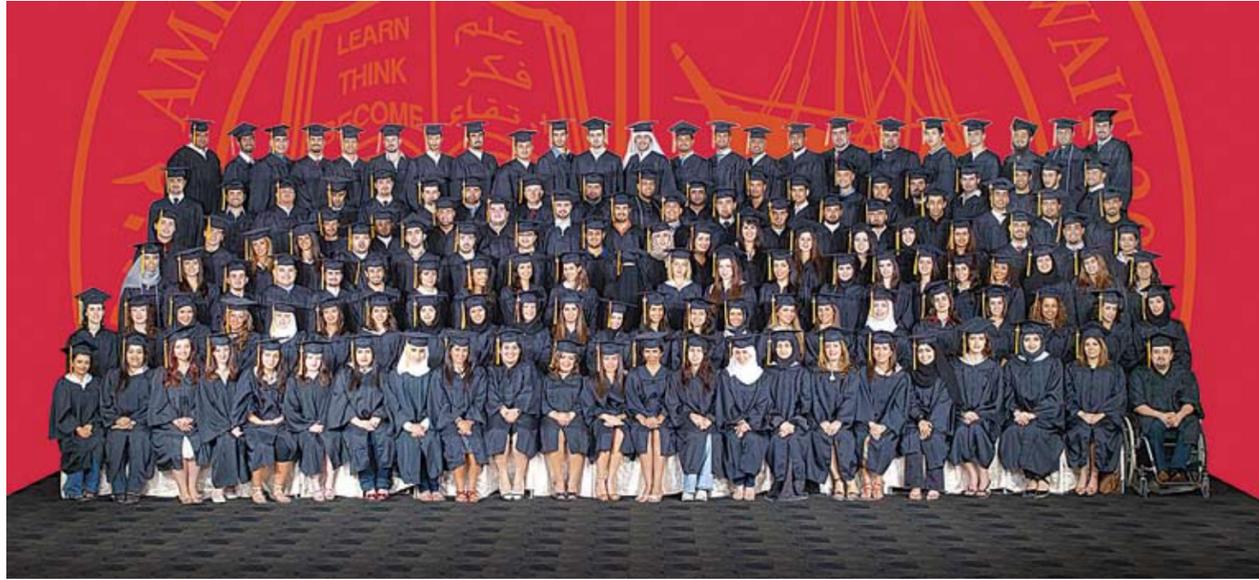
Inaugural Class of 08 Leaves the Nest

By Dina El-Zohairy

In a typical American-style commencement ceremony, AUK graduated its inaugural class of 2008 on the evening of Sunday 22 June at the luxurious Arraya Ballroom. The Commencement was held under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

The ceremony commenced with the entry of 187 students into the graduation hall to the accompaniment of Sir Edward Elgar's famous *Pomp and Circumstance* processional. Despite being requested to remain seated, family and friends of the graduates couldn't help themselves and rose to take pictures and cheer their loved ones as the academic procession marched to the front, led by Professor of Accounting John Russell.

Following the national anthem and a recitation from the Ever-Glorious Qur'an, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Chief Marshall Dr. Nizar Hamzeh gave introductory remarks before giving the floor to AUK President, Dr. Marina Tolmacheva. She expressed her gratitude for parents, members of the Board of Trustees, AUK faculty and staff, and distinguished guests for being part of the celebration and her pride with the graduating students'



achievement, which marks the completion of their undergraduate studies and the beginning of their professional life outside the university. As she put it, "Education is one of the very few fields distinguished by the wearing of the gown," and here they were, dressed in neat black gowns and caps with a yellow tassel.

It was Dr. Al-Sabah who delivered the commencement address in which he highlighted several points, including his personal educational experience which began at Salmiya Kindergarten—former occupant of AUK's current campus—and culminated in a PhD from Har-

vard University. He also talked about the increasingly significant role small nations have to play in today's globalized world, creating unprecedented challenges and opportunities. He ended his speech with invaluable pieces of advice for the graduating students.

More words of wisdom were conveyed to the class of 2008 by Secretary-General of the Council for Private Universities, Dr. Imad Al-Atiqi, and Provost of Dartmouth College, Dr. Barry Scherr. Also present were Shaikha Dana Al-Sabah and Mr. Meshal Ali from AUK's Board of Trustees and National Assembly Speaker Jassem Al-

Kharafi.

The much-awaited conferral of degrees took up the greater part of the evening. Graduates approached the stage one at a time, handing their name cards to PR & Marketing Director Ms. Amal Al-Binali, who announced their names and credentials, including major/minor and Latin honors, if any, before proceeding to accept their diplomas and shake hands with Dr. Al-Atiqi, Dr. Al-Sabah, President Tolmacheva and Dean Hamzeh and finally returning to their seats.

Throughout the ceremony, cheering and horn-blowing on the part of the audience highlighted the evening and must

have pleased the graduates, some of whom reacted by waving to friends and family. The overwhelming majority earned degrees in Business Administration. Communication & Media was the second popular major, followed by Computer Science, English Language & Literature, Information Systems, International Studies and Anthropology. In addition, a number of graduates had a double major or a minor.

Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Carol Ross, then introduced the valedictorian, a student known for setting performance standards in all of her classes among her professors and for

being a helpful, hard-working and inspiring person among her fellow students. Having completed a degree in Business Administration, Razan Sharaf is moving on to Geneva, Switzerland, to pursue her MBA.

Quoting Roman philosopher Seneca, Razan started by stating her favorite quote and source of inspiration, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." Razan went on to extend her thanks to parents, faculty, friends and those working behind the scenes at AUK and in Kuwait, on behalf of the graduates, for making their education possible and supporting them with their pursuit of excellence during their years at AUK. She also highlighted what she considers the merits of studying at a liberal arts institution and the many opportunities and memorable experiences it has offered her and her fellow graduates.

The recessional music, *Hornpipe* by George Handel, heralded the end of the ceremony as the academic procession retired from the hall one row at a time. Afterwards, everybody gathered in the reception area to take pictures with the graduates and to congratulate them. Guests were invited to a mouthwatering buffet after the traditional AUK cake-cutting, before leaving with memories of an enjoyable evening.

The Voice Draws Blood

By Dina El-Zohairy

As several nurses and transporters of reclining chairs and boxes of sterilized medical equipment were ushered from the administration parking lot to the Liberal Arts auditorium, curious passers-by peeped at the emptied hall through its double door, where a posted sign urged them to "Give blood today."

Monday 26 May marked AUK's first blood drive. The event was organized and sponsored by the *Voice of AUK* and made possible by Kuwait's Central Blood Bank's mobile services.

Minutes before noon, the first donors of the day were busy filling out lengthy medical histories that included direct questions about behaviors known to carry a high risk of blood-borne infections. Basic donor information was then entered into a donor database by a Blood Bank staff member. Next, all potential donors had their hemoglobin level, blood pressure, and temperature checked and blood type determined by an analyst and a doctor to greenlight them for donation. Several students, mainly females, got a temporary de-



CCE's Moustafa "Zaza" El-Khashab and Adel Al-Sayed toast the flowing blood.

ferral owing to lower-than-normal hemoglobin levels.

Upon receiving a donor card, male and female students headed to the designated donation areas, where they lied back in one of the chairs and awaited a nurse to attend to them. A new, sterile needle, attached to a thin, plastic tube and a blood bag, was first inserted into a vein in the arm extended on the armrest. Blood initially was collected into tubes for testing. Then it was allowed to fill the bag, about one pint. Donors were

given yellow stress balls to squeeze to help pump the blood out.

During the 15-minute donation process, donors who felt faint were given alcohol swabs to sniff and had their feet elevated, but the majority breezed through it with little or no discomfort. Many brought their friends along to keep them company. Reporters and photographers from a number of local newspapers and magazines were also invited to cover the event.

With a dressing wrapped around their arm, a broad smile and a puffed

up chest, donors headed to the Week-End vending table for a complimentary cup of fresh orange, strawberry or kiwi juice and helped themselves to Krispy Kreme donuts. Donors also received a special white shirt that said "I gave my blood for this shirt!" on the back, as a token of appreciation.

A stream of potential donors kept the hall bustling with activity and the staff occupied all day, even resulting in a backlog of completed medical histories and longer waiting times. At the end of the day, the Blood Bank staff had collected 60 pints of blood from 60 donors—exceeding the organizers' goal by 10 pints.

Surprisingly, only two faculty members showed up. Employees from Campus Services, I.T. and the Center for Continuing Education also came out to donate. Students, however, constituted the majority of the donor population.

The enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by everyone, many first-time donors, and the event's great overall success fully supported the *Voice's* intention to organize a blood drive every year.

Our Father Sheikh Saad May He Rest in Peace

By Farah Al-Shamali

Compassion, resilience, and patriotism—these qualities were embodied by the late Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah who passed away on the 13th of May leaving sadness in our hearts for a figure who shined in Kuwait's relatively short history. The Kuwaiti people will never forget his genuine love of his country and his resistance of any foreign penetration into it. His father, Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, was also renowned and famed for securing the liberation of Kuwait and the signing of its very first constitution. He was known as a man of keen intellect and his

son had definitely inherited his traits. No other ruler of Kuwait loved it more than he had. During the Gulf war, he refused to succumb to pressure and had a hand in getting Sheikh Jaber out of the country into Saudi Arabia.

The Kuwaiti people will forever remember his fortitude and determination to modernize this land. Although he only ruled Kuwait for nine days after the death of Sheikh Jaber, he had a great impact on its domestic affairs throughout his lifetime, serving as the Crown Prince. He contributed much to safeguarding Ku-

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Le monde de la francophonie...à AUK

By Kawther Sadeq

Students walked in and out of the Liberal Arts building, up the stairs or in the elevators and into their classrooms, whilst the French classes were busy preparing their tables for the French Francophone event on Thursday 29th of May from 2pm to 4pm. The auditorium was filled with noises coming from French 101 students trying to decide where to place their displays and merchandise. Each group in there represented a French speaking country, varying from Egypt, Canada, Lebanon and many more.

Right outside the auditorium, busy situating their goods, were the French 389 students, few in number, trying to convince people to donate money to two different French-speaking charitable organizations: "Enfant Bleu", saving abused children and "Care", supporting commu-

nities in need. Teachers and students passing the diner stopped to inquire about the organizations and to buy different kinds of cupcakes, chocolate and homemade cookies being sold to raise money.

Inside the auditorium, music from different French speaking

countries was being played attracting people to enter and view the colorful diversity of each table. Professor Joseph Fiannaca roamed around proudly, taking in the magnificent results of his students' efforts.

The auditorium was filled with French related posters look-

ing down at students who were laughing with the spectators spreading the joy. Participants at the Canadian table looked stunning with their red hockey jerseys on, providing awesome food and what looked like delicious cookies. The Egyptian table enjoyed their time, creat-

ing joyful music with their finger Cymbals as well as offering Egyptian sandwiches. By the Lebanon table, drums were being played enriching the auditorium with the Arabic melodies. Drifting away from French speaking Arabic countries, the French table was gladly recommending

rather large baguettes accompanied with different assortments of cheese, whilst tables representing other countries provided viewers with games and prizes. One table in particular was offering students the opportunity to pick a card in hopes of winning a fancy looking fish.

The happiness that was felt that day was only enhanced when teachers from the Voltaire Institute, including Madame Florence, arrived to enjoy the celebration of France and the French language as well as the mere intention of having fun at the end of the spring 2008 semester.

At the end of the day, teachers and students had to head back to their classes and the French students started to clear up their tables, tired after an exhausting day of providing AUK with an exciting taste of French ambiance.



Liberal Arts Conference

SEA as a Liberal Arts Teaching Methodology

By Nur Soliman

This talk, based on a paper written by Al-Sabban and published in the *Journal of Advances of Physiological Education*, basically detailed Al-Sabban's somewhat unique approach to teaching classes at institutes of higher learning in a more dynamic, independent way which he believes is essential to the development of collegiate skills in any university student. The professor of Nutritional Science and Biology at Kuwait University's College for Women (CFW) in the Adeliya campus said that since "some introductory, compulsory courses [such as BIOL 101 and others] may seem irrelevant for some. Therefore, we need to take the initiative to help foster more interest."

According to Al-Sabban,

"SEA [Self Expression Assignment] is a new teaching approach that is much more suited to 'boring' intro courses to boost such interest." He explained that it allowed greater freedom in learning in that the student was not limited in the way they approached their subject. Al-Sabban stated that the students who engaged in the preliminary attempt at SEA (involving a project worth 20% of their final grade) were 119 in number, ranging across 3 of his courses in Anatomy, Nutrition, and Biology.

Because of the "varied academic interests, ambitions, and personal talents," the students were asked to work on a project that reflected an aspect or unit of the course taken and present it as best as they could, be it through a written report, term paper, models,

paintings, films, computer-generated animations, oral presentations, cartoons, and so on. The grading rubric, which caused some debate among AUK listeners who wanted to know more, was based on a CFW-approved rubric which allowed for creativity (75%), educational/scientific content (15%), and quality of finished product (10%).

Al-Sabban reported that the overall response to the SEA experiment was wholly positive, with students enthusiastically supporting it because it gave them the freedom to produce a project entirely according to their own whims and ideas, which ultimately instilled greater pride in their work, independence, commitment, and responsibility for the way their projects turned out.

Eman Way Foundation Looks at Muslim Identity

By Nur Soliman

One may often be disheartened when the turn-out for a lecture or concert is a trifle insignificant, but sometimes the sheer enthusiasm of those present is more than enough to compensate for the lack in number. In this case, though there were only 7 or 8 women with tiny children in the upstairs balcony, accompanied by their husbands and other men in the lower bays, Yahya Ederer's talk did not fall on deaf ears. Ederer's energetic talk on modesty and the importance of *hayaa'*, sometimes loosely translated as shame, or bashfulness interested the audience greatly.

Ederer, working in the English department of the Islamic Presentation Committee (IPC), and frequent giver of Friday sermons at Kuwait's English-language mosque, converted to Islam at the age of 19 when he was studying in the United States. He studied Arabic and Islamic studies in universities in the States, followed by 3 years in Egypt learning intensive Arabic (which would explain his very strong Egyptian inflections); he is also approaching completion of his *ijazah*, or the teaching license to teach Qur'anic studies and so forth. "I'm no mufti," Ederer repeated jokingly, but his knowledge was certainly quite extensive, and he did not hesitate to quote often from the Qur'an and refer to *hadiths* or even exegeses in different schools.

The talk was organized and hosted by EmanWay Foundation, a year-old English-language branch of the Grand Mosque offices spearheaded by Sheikh Al-Awadhi, a well-known Kuwaiti speaker on Islam to youth (and visitor to AUK campus), dedicated to reaching the English-speaking Muslim—or non-Muslim—community. Following the *maghrib* or sunset prayer in the smallish, well-gardened Abi Sufyan Mosque, the

worshippers were given the time to perform the *sumna* or further prayers before Ederer began. EmanWay certainly did a commendable job by starting their lecture series with Ederer. He was well-spoken, given English was his native tongue and he had the talent of being humorous at times, and was very organized in terms of the order of points as he meant them to develop, peppered with anecdotes or references to the Qur'an or *hadiths*, but one felt that perhaps the speech was a bit over-simplified.

Ederer began with a definition of *hayaa'*—and wisely so, for had he plunged immediately into perhaps the spiritual significance of modesty in behavior, one would have been immediately lost—as "the deeper motivation for behavior and observation of a respectful life, feeling shy to do anything wrong and wanting to do right constantly" in hope of pleasing God. He referred to a *hadith*, or Prophetic oral tradition, where the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is narrated as saying in Arabic "For every faith there is a specific attribute; that of Islam is modesty." Ederer went on to say that one must have modesty from the Lord himself, to avoid ill deeds for fear He may be angered, to have modesty from oneself and in oneself (being modest in your gaze, your hearing, your speech, your actions), and others as well. "One must critically think about things and why things are good or bad" and therefore better understand the reasons for one's behavior, Ederer said.

This writer, as one of the listeners, personally thought that perhaps the most important motivation for modest behavior and modest approaches to life was the following: "to be mindful of mortality and be aware of the greatest blessings in your lives." G K

Chesterton once wrote that wonder and gratitude are perhaps the noblest forms of thought; surely that finds echo here: in knowledge of the impermanence of life, one is in constant awe—and thus reverence—for one's Creator and also appreciative and ever-grateful of what He has given you. Ederer remarked that one thing Muslims must be grateful for is that the Prophet had been sent to redeem and enlighten them, revealing for us "The Most Beautiful God" for us, which Muslims surely ought to be grateful for.

One of the more disappointing aspects of the talk was that occasionally Ederer would re-gurgitate the old, conventional views of certain scholars that tend to put young Muslims off. This is not to say that such views are discouraging *per se*; rather, individuals who hold them, and they way in which they are typically presented, do not always work on contemporary wavelengths.

Part of Ederer's skill was that in terms of oratory his words did not come across as strict, though the nature of some of his instructions were sometimes of the "herd mentality" category, and did not make the real effort to further explain the spiritual beauty of certain laws. Indeed, all his advice was at heart, a most beautiful notion; what was perhaps missing was that the spiritual substance that indeed motivates some Muslims to perform these acts was not explained by Ederer, left out because his main priority was sometimes that of the law. That aside, Ederer's energetic nature and willingness to relate it to our world drove the concept of modesty perhaps a little closer to home, suggesting that this humble gratitude become the most essential spirit of one's life and the way one goes about it.



The news by students, for students.

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Pangea Day: Healing the World Through Film

By Nuha Al-Fadli

On May 10th, seven musicians from diverse cultures joined in a global drum circle to honor the heart beat of the world and initiate the international multimedia celebration of Pangea Day. In an attempt to use “the power of film to bring the world a little closer,” the organizers of this memorable event used the legacy of Pangea, the supercontinent, to transcend the fragile boundaries of race, religion and ethnicity, and remind audiences of the unitary nature of humankind. By linking Cairo, Kigali, London, Los Angeles, Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro to produce a four hour program of poignant films, inspiring music and powerful speeches, Pangea Day managed to hail the creativity of the human spirit and unite the world in a unique shared experience.

Although the success of the festival resided in the collective effort of various nations, it originated with the altruistic ambition of a renowned documentary filmmaker Jehane Noujaim. As an Egyptian American, Noujaim is interested in studying the rift between the East and West. In fact, in her highly acclaimed film *Control Room*, Noujaim investigates the role of US Central Command (CENTCOM), and its relations with Al Jazeera and other news organizations that covered the controversial invasion of Iraq in 2003.

After receiving the Technology Entertainment Design (TED) Prize for her work in 2006, she was offered ten thousand dollars and granted a “wish to change the world.” For her wish, and with Nokia as her premier global partner, Noujaim decided to bring to life her dream of a Pangea Day, a live video-conference that would be internationally broadcasted via Internet, television, and mobile phone. Schools in conflict zones, UNHCR refugee camps, and other disadvantaged areas were sent video-enabled devices that granted them an opportunity to take part in Pangea Day.

Using film as an innovative medium for storytelling, Noujaim challenged people to communicate their stories using as little language as possible. Instead, she encouraged them to use the power of emotions such as fear, anger, hate and love to communicate the message of hope and change. Ultimately, however, Noujaim aspired to promulgate world peace in an era stricken by war, poverty and oppression.

In an interview with NEWSWEEK, Noujaim states, “Once you listen to somebody’s story, it’s

harder to kill.” By awakening individuals to the personal plight of those devastated by conflicts, Pangea Day addressed issues such as the violation of human rights, terrorism and global warming to advocate “global identity, the sense of We as a human race.” By giving voiceless people an opportunity to express their unique experiences, this event endeavored to create an appreciation for diversity and an understanding of one another.

During the festivities, twenty-four short films were presented to a global audience to celebrate the wide spectrum of humanity. One of the highlights



of the evening was Orlando Mesquita’s “The Ball.” Mesquita is a recognized director whose projects examine the various facets of Mozambican life such as the plight of women, refugees and decommissioned soldiers. Through his short documentary “The Ball,” Mesquita tackles the issue of venereal diseases in a creative, unorthodox and humane manner. The film depicts how in their desire to play soccer, children find a curious way to make a football—by inflating condoms and wrapping them in



thread. These Mozambique children thus consume more contraceptives than do the adults. In experiencing African life through the innocent eyes of children, this humbling presentation forces audiences to see the diseases, poverty and ignorance that violate the lives of many African children.

Another topic that was covered during the elaborate conference was climate change and the role human-

kind is playing in the destruction of nature. In his award winning animated film “Papiroflexia,” Joaquin Baldwin’s juxtaposes the serenity of nature with the clamor and pollution of modern life. To bring harmony to a discordant Earth, the protagonist of the film returns things to their natural order. For instance, he transforms a cold mechanical city into an idyllic forest. To blend with his natural surroundings, the character then transforms himself into a bear.

Since Pangea Day aspires to instill a sense of social responsibility and respect for human life, the selection of films it displayed

emphasized these values. This is best captured by the English writer and director Serdar Ferit in his film “Elevator Music.” Trouble begins to brew in the elevator as each person defies the others by raising the volume of the music on their iPods and mobile phones. However, they are all silenced when a tall domineering man enters with a large stereo. Ironically, although he could overshadow all those present, he chooses to respect them by using headphones.

By exemplifying the

peaceful and humanistic principles of the occasion, these films lay the foundation for creating a global community that strives to create a better future. The message of these influential and compelling artistic pieces was perhaps best captured by the actress and host Cameron Diaz when she stated, “How can films change the world? They can’t, but the people who watch them can. By chang-

ing minds, we change the world.” Thus, by raising awareness and addressing crucial matters that require global concern, Pangea Day proved that it was not simply an entertaining event, but a profound call for reformation.

Even though Noujaim wished to “heal the world through film,” she managed to convey her message through various other methods. For example, between films, she invited a large number of acclaimed speakers to discuss current political and socioeconomic issues in a supervising yet inspiring manner. Ranging from Jordan’s Queen Noor to Ishmael Beah, a former



child soldier, and journalist Mariane Pearl to planetary explorer Carolyn Porco, the speakers shared powerful stories of their experiences.

One of the most stimulating presentations of the evening was prepared by Christiane Amanpour, chief international correspondent for CNN, whose fearless dedication and clear humanity has made her an influential figure in modern broadcast journalism. To accentuate the values of Pangea Day, Amanpour introduced two Lebanese figures

and answering that it is the discipline or approach that fosters skills like critical thinking. Olson argued that the effectiveness of teaching these skills depended on the structural design of the university. He argued that GCC countries devote millions of dollars to investing in such university projects and found that they failed considerably in producing a trained class to enter the workforce. “For emerging GCC universities and colleges,” Olson remarked, “a Liberal Arts education ought to be fitted with the environment in terms of missions, goals, rules, and structures,” including purposeful action-plans, intended outcomes to enhance critical thinking, and Liberal Arts-specific curricula.

While Pangea Day lasted for a mere four hours, its focus on transcending the borders of misunderstanding will be engraved in the hearts of all those witnessed this beautiful event. It was

only during such a day that world would witness Austrians singing the Lebanese national anthem and Japanese chanting the Turkish anthem in utter harmony as they celebrate and embrace the unity of humankind. Mark Olson: “Resolving Liberal Arts Needs for a Muslim Majority Setting”

By Nur Soliman
Some of the audience members were surprised, if not slightly bewildered, to learn that Olson’s topic had absolutely nothing to do with a Muslim-majority setting *per se*, but in-

stead aimed to discuss the needs of Liberal Arts in “rentier states” as Kuwait was, which not all Muslim-concentrated regions are. Based on that first correction, then, Olson, a professor at Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST), began by describing his paper as initiating “organizational design and issues for research thereof.” He first posed the question of “what *are* liberal arts?”

and thereby create strict methods by which to maintain liberal arts qualities within such a society, and keep it stable, by centralizing power in the organization and “flattening the hierarchy,” as well as creating more short-time goals to better foster real critical thinking skills in students.

Liberal Arts Conference Delivering American Liberal Arts in Qatar

By Nur Soliman

Dr. Adhip Chaudhuri, professor of International Economy at Georgetown University of Qatar's school of Foreign Economical Studies, was refreshingly eloquent and thoroughly enthusiastic about Liberal Arts models in the Gulf, and began by addressing the equally-important question: "Why is the American liberal arts model transported so much?" When teaching about multinational corporations, Chaudhuri says, what is discussed is what gives one competitor great advantage over others, or why some markets or products are in greater demand than others. Liberal arts education is a marketable, institutional product, Chaudhuri says, that can be analyzed the same way—an exercise which immensely interests him, despite its being a little far from his discipline.

Dr. Chaudhuri began with the earliest roots of liberal arts, going right back to the Ancient Greeks, whose ideological schools decided on a number of skills that they thought essential to any person's education: grammar, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, and so on, and to teach these skills in a way that enabled learners to apply them realistically, thereby gain even deeper knowledge. According to Chaudhuri, an educated man was a free man, while an educate society helped

produce "more leaders, more knowing, participating citizens."

"So why are universities in China, India, and the Middle East so similar in that changes are taking place in their structures and approaches?" Chaudhuri returned to the Greeks, explaining that liberal arts is an amalgamation of the two Greek schools: Aristotle's "Classics" and Socrates' "Sophists". He explained that while the Classics advocated strength in virtue and the ability to argue both ways, or have "dialectic" skill, and explore all facets of an idea, the Sophists stressed on skills like grammar and logic to perfect one's understanding and delivery. Though the two were opposed, "both agreed that knowledge was important for people to be well-rounded" and the schools evolved to accept that one's education must not be fragmented, such that one can read poetry and also solve mathematical equations.

The now charmingly excited Chaudhuri began to relate the second stage that liberal arts went through. This was in the 1800s, where the conventional but liberal-arts-advocate Catholic John Cardinal Newman engaged in a debate with the John Locke on the "usefulness" of learning, arguing that one should reduce stress on "Latin and instead look at agriculture." This debate continued and was exported in the US in the 1880s with vocational

colleges being "people's colleges." Tension arose between elitist schools like Yale and more vocational schools. The conflict was resolved in 1900s with the US combining the liberal arts with more practical "arts and sciences," the former becoming an island of sorts. "Now schools like Harvard realized that the two no longer have to be swimming separately: now, biology and business students have to learn ethics, and literature students still have to know about geometry. And this is where we are."

Chaudhuri began listing the different satellite campuses around Qatar, now home to many foreign universities like Virginia Commonwealth for the arts, Texas A & M for petroleum engineering, Carnegie Mellon for computer science and business, and Georgetown University for international studies and economics. Qatar, realizing the importance of combining "Latin" and "agriculture," as it were, invited all these specialist universities in an attempt to foster similar skills in its own students, Chaudhuri explained.

He gave two examples of how liberal arts were combined with hard sciences for students in Georgetown at least, where he teaches. Theology, in a class called "The Problem of God" which puts off both religiously conventional and non-humanities students alike, but thrills others who

flock to Georgetown, interested in this class among others.

As a second example, in an attempt to reinforce the importance of delivery no matter what the discipline, "writing across the curriculum" is made important not only for freshman composition classes but indeed carries on well into the student's undergraduate career, combined with the odd compulsory Literature course. "This is what they're good at," Chaudhuri explained, helping the students to communicate their thoughts and knowledge in the clearest writing. "So when I do write that Economics paper, it is that very writing that helps me show what I know and make my arguments clear."

Carnegie Mellon does something similar, Chaudhuri continued, with their Culture courses and inter-disciplinary approach whereby courses from various disciplines are made compulsory—much like AUK's general education requirements—to ensure that their students graduate with some appreciative knowledge of these different fields.

"Thanks to these," Chaudhuri concluded, "I've seen how many students absolutely love our theology courses and also learn how to think well in their Economics," where an amalgamation of the two is what creates their liberal arts education in the Gulf.

Sheikh Saad continued from page 1

wait's future: he was the head of the government during the grave years during the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwaiti invasion, launched the international public relations campaign that was crucial to informing the international community of Kuwait's suffering under the Saddamist regime, and was the first of Kuwait's leaders to come back after the war concluded to help rebuild his country in 1991.

The year of 1961 which marked Kuwait's independence saw the appointment of Sheikh Saad as Chief of Police and Public Security. Throughout the years, he gained prominence in other positions until he was declared the Crown Prince in 1978. It is Sheikh Saad's frequent visits to neighboring Gulf countries and those in the surrounding Middle East to bolster Kuwait's regional relations. A year prior to the Iraqi invasion, he visited Baghdad to strengthen Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations. "We made positive steps towards solving the issue of international borders between both countries and we agreed to follow up and end this issue," he said upon leaving Iraq following discussions.

Beginning in 1997, he had begun undergoing treatment for a bleeding colon which continued to worsen into the new millennium. This caused him to have to leave the country continuously for medication and surgery. Upon the death of Sheikh Jaber, his deteriorating health did not permit him to be sworn into office. However, we are certain that Kuwait would definitely have benefited from such a visionary leader.

Sheikh Saad gave to the security of Kuwait and this article does not do him enough justice. On behalf of the Kuwaiti people, the *Voice of AUK* pays its condolences to the Al-Sabah family for the loss of a man of virtue and selflessness. His patriotism is unprecedented and goes beyond the borders of moral duty. We will never lose sight of his countless achievements that have paved the way for development in Kuwait. We only hope that the entirety of the Kuwaiti people will realize them and work to uphold them.

Liberal Arts Conference Liberal Arts Needs for a Muslim Majority Setting

By Nur Soliman

Some of the audience members were surprised, if not slightly bewildered, to learn that Olson's topic had absolutely nothing to do with a Muslim-majority setting *per se*, but instead aimed to discuss the needs of Liberal Arts in "rentier states" as Kuwait was, which not all Muslim-concentrated regions are. Based on that first correction, then, Olson, a professor

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tural design of the university. He argued that GCC countries devote millions of dollars to investing in such university projects and found that they failed considerably in producing a trained class to enter the workforce. "For emerging GCC universities and colleges," Olson remarked, "a Liberal Arts education ought to be fitted with the environment in terms of missions, goals, rules, and structures," includ-

ing purposeful action-plans, intended outcomes to enhance critical thinking, and Liberal Arts-specific curricula.

With rentier states, Olson argued, such implementation is difficult. Of course, the whole argument could easily be challenged, but Olson brought up several popularly culture-specific traits in rentier states, or Kuwait, that impeded liberal arts education. One was "the lack of meritocracy" in the so-

ciety's structure, whereby education is disconnected from society and success therein. The other was the ancient custom of "rote-learning" which was only explained as detrimental and consistently reproduced in "new guises." Pressure for graduated students to quickly enter the market was also harmful. According to his own data collection, only 28% of a 100 sample students applied critical thinking skills, and that 18% of that sample had been caught committing plagiarism, indicating that "they don't know what they're doing, and report without analyzing." Olson concluded that that was because they didn't appreciate the value of skills, knowing that they were not required in a society where success is often based on lineage.

Solution for combating these problems facing the GCC? One was organized learning, and how methods like "deutero-learning," or learning *how* to learn, could help. Quoting several scholarly articles, Olson advocated Engineered Rational Organizational Design which is working to analyze the environment in which the liberal arts methods are to be implemented, and thereby create strict methods by which to maintain liberal arts qualities within such a society, and keep it stable, by centralizing power in the organization and "flattening the hierarchy," as well as creating more short-time goals to better foster real critical thinking skills in students.



2008 SGA Elections

By Farah Al-Shamali

The student body at the American University of Kuwait is appreciative of democracy and favorable towards the betterment of this institution. Every year, students cast their votes for candidates that they feel will propel this university into greatness. As the solitary voice of students both within and outside of AUK, the Student Government Association embodies the power to make substantial change. It is the umbrella under which students can seek shelter if they face challenges in their academic and social life. Over the years, the role of the SGA has become much more crucial as the realization of student rights comes to be more seriously addressed. Anyone going into office must fully apprehend the duties and responsibilities he or she has towards the AUK community. It goes without saying that this year the elections took quite a turn in bringing the student's voice to the fore. The uniqueness of this year's elections took us through what so many other student governments and even national governments go through to win the approval of the students and countrymen, respectively.

Glistening photographs and eloquent speeches can bring a candidate initial success but

he or she will be stripped bare of them later on. Having been a successful candidate in these past elections, my experience had been one to treasure. I was enthralled by the power politics that happened before my eyes. Being an International Studies major, it is my joy to put what I learn in class into practice. Although I fully comprehend the fact politics can be stealthy and scandalous, it is interesting to see how it is manifested in the electoral process.

The marketable facet of this year's elections is its vivacious nature. The democratic process has become buttressed by AUK students, faculty, staff, and administration to ensure fairness. I also find that the AUK community is moving more towards choosing candidates based on merit and not popularity. During large-scale government elections, it may be difficult to avoid this occurrence. But it can certainly be nipped in the bud at university elections. We are a tight-knit community that relies heavily on student participation. All employed and club/organization-affiliated students are driving the wheel of success further and developing the university through its earliest stages so that it can be considered a worthy contender among others in Kuwait.

The university may be witnessing physical and bureaucratic changes but it still falls short of meeting the needs of students in some respects. This is where the Student Government Association comes into the picture, being solely dedicated to addressing student concerns. When the SGA and students create a united front, nothing is impossible. We seek to make an eternal change that will become part of our legacy. Rest assured that those in office at the moment also went through times when they were unheard and would definitely not wish the same for their fellow students. Every SGA should be given a chance to prove their existence and competence.

No matter the reason or circumstance, the student protest that had taken place during this year's elections has breathed new life into how we define democracy here at AUK. It has also given the newly chosen SGA steadfast motivation and has opened their eyes to what they must remain sensitive to for the entirety of their time in office: the student's voice. If Horace, the famed Roman lyric poet, asks for us to "seize the day", then we must seize the moment and never lose sight of our priorities as representatives of over a thousand students.



AUK students protest against proposed morality regime outside parliament.

The Absurdity of Morality Police

By Farah Al-Shamali

Every time I choose to write an article regarding a hindrance on Kuwait's development as a nation, I do so with exasperation. However, they will never be eradicated if not made known to the public. Recently, Kuwait's newly elected parliament has expressed its hopes to install a moral police force in our midst. They will be controlling our outer appearances and behavioral conduct in the public sphere.

In retaliation to this absurdity, I would like first and foremost to state that this means nothing less than an assault on the Kuwaiti people. By taking this step, the parliament is clearly implying that the Kuwaiti people have no morals. I, as a Kuwaiti, refuse to allow that. The practice of ministers has become common knowledge to Kuwaiti citizens primarily due to its small size.

On more than one occasion, media outlets have reported on ministers who defy their own

alleged standards and breach their own codes of conduct. Unless they are above us in some sort of way, I do not see why they can continuously be in violation of the laws they seek to put into practice. Frankly, it is sickening to see Kuwait fall within the hands of hypocrites.

The way in which these members of parliament speak passionately about creating these superfluous changes in Kuwait—changes which will reap no benefit—gives the impression that this nation is suffering from no other ills. It is as if this will solve all of our problems, and no other area of Kuwait's development needs attention. I beg to differ: Kuwait has many gaps to fill and hurdles to jump. Water scarcity alone is a huge dilemma that we only deal with temporarily. Why can't we ensure permanent salvation? Bureaucracy in Kuwait is as its worst and is fueled by a palpable sense of favoritism. When will we ever go against that?

In the end, the blame can not

be placed upon the members of parliament and ministers who are leading Kuwait to its demise but upon the people themselves who chose incorrectly—repeatedly. The Kuwaiti population is not immersed into politics and so do not have the background required to assess the credibility of potential politicians in Kuwait. All we seem to care about is going to malls and cinema complexes. First, it was segregation and now the moral police. Soon enough, social activity will be at a stalemate. I do not foresee a promising future for Kuwait under the current parliament.

The people of Kuwait need to put an end to this meaninglessness. I am glad that the Kuwaiti youth is taking a stance and have staged protests in front of the parliament. I truly hope that they change the face of Kuwait. This is our home and we will not forsake it and watch it crash and burn. It will be salvaged and evolved into a contender on the world stage.

Family Bookshop Legacy

By Nur Soliman

How does your list of bookstores in Kuwait go? Virgin Megastore, Kuwait Bookshop, Jarir Bookstore, Saeed and Samir Bookstore, perhaps Manara Bookstore. Most of these are fine havens for any book-lover; never a weekend afternoon wasted browsing. However, one that escapes the memory of most is perhaps one of the older bookstores: The Family Bookshop.

This 1970s bookstore hides away quietly behind a now-demolished site, modestly heralded by a small orange sign. Long glass windows proudly display now dusty children's picture-books, coffee-table travel guides, traditional references, and popular bestsellers. But it is inside the store that resembles a long-abandoned treasure trove permeated by the scent of dusty, delicate pages. Rows upon rows of revered, dusty Shakespeare lean against one another peacefully, while on the adjacent bookcase musty but elegant Chekhov rubs shoulders with bright paperback Darwin; a stylishly designed edition of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* stands alongside slim volumes of Victorian poetry. All these classics sit straight and silent in abundance, much to the joy of the wandering customer. Alongside all the American, British, French, and Russian classics sit piles upon piles of blue-and-white or yellow-and-black Cambridge Student Literature Guides for the British school students who trickle in the store and inquire after these in anxious voices. Their classic literature collection is certainly one of the most comprehensive that Kuwait has to

offer, holding some more or less complete series of Twain, Fitzgerald, Henry James, Dickens, and Tolstoy.

Initially known as a bookstore set up by pious church-goers, the Family (Holy Family, that is) Bookshop opened its doors in the 1970s, and has since earned the loyalty of book-lovers, art, literature, and drama students, and children who return there as often as they can, though one might say that these loyal visitors' patience and interest is waning. Their classic literature collection—as antiquated as it is—is to be admired. In fact, it also offers shelves upon shelves of Greek and Roman writers, also housing anthologies and poetry, terrific volumes on Buddhism, Islam, Greek philosophy, language, academics, travel, arts, and children's books, as well as rows of mysteries, Christie and Doyle alike.

But why have their books remained on their shelves immobile for as long as I can remember and as long as 1980s literature students can remember? The same Scottish Short Stories Anthology that I saw when I visited the store at age 11 to look at Guy de Maupassant has remained on the top left corner right up until my last visit it last a week or so ago. I have learned where to find the biographies of the Dalai Lama (to the right of M Scott Peck), and my list never has to change much as I always know the books will be there. Surely that says something.

Yes, their marketing department is virtually nil, and they seem to have no plan to work on it, either, explaining that what

customers have found them already are enough, and thank heavens they haven't any loitering teenagers about the bookshelves. Yes, that's all very well, but aren't those loitering teenagers the ones you'd like to see thumbing a Dickens or a book on Palestinian dress? And because of their non-existent public relations, the books they've got are probably going to crumble on the shelves as they are, nor does the store show any signs of dramatically adding much to their collections. The same Chekhov that one bought in the year 2002 is the very same one that one sees in 2008—one tends to tire of listlessly reading the same titles over the years and tires being mystified and bothered time and time again that slim poetry volumes are three times more costly than a generously sized Tolstoy, surely threatening Family Bookshop's established customer base. Their collection is excellent and it's too good to let years' worth of dust settle on their jackets because there is no vibrant move for change or attraction of new customers.

On a more hopeful note, the owners and employees of Family Bookshop do not always display such passiveness; they are adamantly refusing to close down, despite many unfortunate threats over the past three years; and they are always more than happy to help in perusing the shelves for that one specific edition of Sherlock Holmes you were looking for; let's hope enough of us are excited enough to keep them moving for a good while longer.

A Nation of Clans

By Suliman Al-Ateeqi

Kuwait has held its MP elections

Within the process there were many seductions

The country is divided in so many sects

Causing the birth to many defects

Children ran for families and clans

To help fulfill their future plans

A plan to split the nation's wealth

An effort requiring the utmost stealth

The herd would graze on fertile land

Until the field can no longer withstand

Once they reach full penetration

They set their sights for a new location

They load their camels for next migration

In order to feed on a new destination

Some may argue against this connotation

Unfortunately there is no other explanation

The only outcome for this sad situation

Is pity for a state whose clans are the nation

Lo Còr de La Plana: Lively Polyphonies from Marseilles

By Nur Soliman

“The vocals of Lo Còr de la Plana are sharp and rough, with an arid beauty. You enter into the dance and end up dumbfounded before all that controlled energy, power, and sense of rhythm. That dissonance lead[s] to a remarkable harmony of fragility and sensitivity.” So wrote Olivier Jourdan-Roulot of the French publication *Le Point*, of Lo Còr de la Plana, the group of six men from Marseilles who visited Kuwait and performed to a packed, enthusiastic audience on June 11th as part of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letter (NCCAL) of Kuwait’s 11th Annual International Music Festival, and who were given an award of appreciation on behalf of the Council in recognition for their service to their culture and their brilliant performance. Though the concert began half an hour later than arranged, the audience remained captivated in their seats for a good two hours and still felt as though they could listen to more, as was made apparent several times throughout the concert, one of the most brilliant that NCCAL has hosted.

Lo Còr de la Plana (pronounced *loo cooar day la plan*, or the Quarter of La Plaine) hail from Marseilles in Southern France (known to some as Marselha), where most natives do not quite speak French, but instead L’Occitane, an ancient language known to stem from both French and Latin, and a delightfully unique amalgamation in its own right. “In Paris, they say we scream a lot, are noisy, we like shouting [and they say] that we’re lazy and like to do nothing” says group leader Manu Théron with a charming smile. “They are right,” he adds, much to the surprise and delight of the audience, “but at least we do it well and do it right.”

Part of the motivation for the group’s revival of Occitan heritage is in expression of their love and pride for their historical identity, and their need for it to be judged as equal to French culture. In it, they keep alive the beautiful, haunting polyphony of medieval European churches that classically made use of polyphonies in their hymns: different parts of the choir would sing different melodies or chords at *counterpoint*, whereby their streaming songs would weave in and out of one another, thus creating intricate music.

Not only did Lo Còr de la Plana display some of their talent for medieval-style song, such as their charmingly soft, slow (to start with) “The Bride” who is “a joy to see, full of such beauty”, but they marry this flawlessly the robustness of their folk music, wherein polyphony rings right through in their mix of skin drums (*bendirs*), tambourines (*taburello*), clapping (*bataments*), and stomp-



ing (*picaments*). Songs would typically include a deep, husky melody line by Denis Sampieri, Manuel Barthélémy, and Sébastien Spessa singing with their skin drums, tambourines, and feet keeping rhythm in time, now fast, now lilting, combined with the rhythm of alto-singers Rodin Kaufmann’s and Benjamin Novarino-Giana’s robust clapping and fierce stamping of the feet, and Manu’s passionate, trembling voice wailing above the whole joyous din.

Lo Còr de la Plana’s selection for the night came from their huge repertoire of traditional songs as well as some of their newer compositions from their recent album *Tent Deman*. One of the pieces that the audience responded to with great energy was one entitled “Mi Parletz de Tralhar,” where Manu began, alone, with an intense, feeling solo, his high voice resounding to the back of the Abdul-Aziz Hussein Theatre. With a sudden lift of his voice and a nod of his head, Manu heralded the beating of the drums to a quick motif, accompanied by Barthélémy’s tambourines and the altos’ clapping, all to a regular beat that was not quite French, Mediterranean, or European, but suggestive of all and yet still entirely unique. Manu’s voice occasionally rose above the thundering skins, the high tones fluttering with earnestness yet in perfect tandem with the whole force of the composition, so that voice, drum, hand, and foot alike fashioned a piece into which every element was perfectly incorporated.

One piece, “Jorns de mai,” or “Days in May” recalled the ancient polyphonies of the church mingled with the folk rhythms that Manu explained

would be sung to express the beauty and delight that comes over people of Marseilles when their thoughts turn to love and such. As with most of their pieces, there was distinct *rubato*, or flexibility of tempo, where the loud and soft, the slow and fast, would all exchange with one another and blend regularly throughout the pieces.

“Leva ti dau mitan,” or “Get out of my Way” was lovingly and cheerfully dedicated to all disdainful Parisians. The beat was very vigorous, energetic and as time-honored as the style, voicing the questions Marseillans had for France, best pictured for the audience with Manu’s singing with his hand on his heart. Pieces like “Tent Deman,” “Condés,” and “Fanfarnéta,” all represented the wide repertoire that Lo Còr de la Plana embraced wholeheartedly, from sacred church harmonies to boyish whoops, from Occitan motifs on the drums to purely vocal notes sung long.

As Jon Pareles of the New York Times wrote of the group when they visited New York January of this year, “with just those voices and percussion, they did remarkable things. They sang rich chordal harmonies and joyfully ricocheting counterpoint. There were drones and dissonances akin to Eastern European music, sustained solo vocal lines related to Arabic music and Gregorian chant, and percussive call-and-response hinting at Africa — all the connections of a Mediterranean hub. The music was equally robust and intricate, a local sound ready for export.”

Indeed, as Manu’s fingers fluttered over his skin drum and both Denis and Sébastien struck their own with a delightful fierceness, the tattoos and

motifs became so sharply Gulf that the audience suddenly exploded into surprised, pleased applause. As Pareles writes, Manu’s wailing, rambling voice was reminiscent of Moroccan or North African *mellisma*, that is, the rapid fluttering of one’s voice from major to minor, up and down, while certain motifs on their drums had Celtic strains, and their beautiful vocal harmony recalled contemporary British composer Karl Jenkin’s vocal arrangements as well as beautiful medieval church harmonies. All of these reflected their geography and society, which Manu stressed to the audience between performances in clear, pleasantly accented English, voicing the changing, living identity that is L’Occitane.

Now rolling his eyes to show his whites as though in a trance, or flashing his bright blue eyes here and there as in a pantomime, Manu’s voice and those of the others trembled high and low with the fervor of patriotism, charming jest—of themselves and others—and love for everything that makes up their Marseilles. As they write in their profile, the music of Lo Còr de la Plana exemplifies the exciting, messy, rowdy, peaceful, and ever-unique life that they lead and love. As Manu said after a terrific dance piece, “As some of you know, Marseilles is a very dangerous place, but it is also a beautiful place, and we love it... We know you’ll love it, too.”

Lo Còr de la Plana certainly demonstrated their love for Marseilles in the most beautiful expression that music would give them, sharing it with their fellow Frenchmen, Francophone speakers, and music-lovers alike and giving them a taste of what one small community had to say about life in a nation thousands of miles away. Indeed, they communicated this well to an audience that remained thrilled and transported, completely captivated by the beauty of Marseilles’ music; so well that they offered a phenomenally fast and enthusiastic standing ovation as the six bowed shyly, pleased, in unison, arms over shoulders. Indeed, what probably best voiced the sentiments of the whole audience was an anonymous member in the hall who shouted out after one piece “C’est magnifique!”

The NCCAL hosts an Annual International Music Festival in Abdul-Aziz Hussein Hall every year, with performers from all around the world of different styles and backgrounds. Look out for next year’s schedules on billboards, posters, and newspapers, both English and Arabic. You can learn more about Lo Còr de Plana, their music, ideas, and members, and listen to some of their songs on www.troisquatre.com.

Minarets and Spires: Ascension Across Faiths

By Nur Soliman

For the past three issues of Kuwait’s arts and literary newspaper *Kuwait Review*, Rev. Andy Thompson of the Anglican Church has been publishing some excellent articles on “Art Through the Eyes of Faith.” He visits different religious centers, and describes their beautiful interiors, elaborating on their spiritual significance. From the divine porcelain gardens of Kuwait’s Grand Mosque’s tiled surfaces to the gentle, delicate altar-painting of pious St. Therese de Lisieux in the Church of Our Lady Arabia, Rev. Thompson never fails to extricate from the art of any of his visits a clear, pure sense of God’s presence as it spoke to him through portrait or porcelain.

And I believe that Rev. Thompson’s idea is an admirable one; indeed, one that ought to be fostered among more and more individuals, if it hasn’t caught on already. To bind common threads across cultures and faiths, and then realize the delightfully different ways they go about realizing these common spirits is an interesting, noble effort, and one that often works. In no way does acknowledgement of another’s beauty

undermine one’s own, but both are made all the more great in one’s appreciative eyes. This increased tolerance enlarges the space for one’s enjoyment of beauty as others hew it. Especially in our time, people have now devoted much effort in emphasizing the divides between say, East and West, Christianity and Islam, thus widening the gulf that grows ever larger between them and making it harder for them to be reconciled. Of course, this is most emphatically *not* true of many communities if not most, and Rev. Thompson’s reaching out is but a single example of the many inter-faith unisons that emerge in Kuwait and elsewhere.

Going back to architecture, one bridge in faith that I always see, as new as I am to the studies of either, is between Gothic (13th century, pre-Renaissance European) and Islamic (particularly Persian or North African) architecture, rather, church and mosque interiors. Both of these exhibit a joyous delight in the eternity of the other-world, and a pleasure in the presence of heavenly hosts despite, or rather through their radically diverse styles, techniques, and environments. That is to say, though

they bear very little resemblance to one another, both offer expressions of a similar sentiment in their techniques to the common contemplative observer

In every passage one reads on Gothic architecture, one finds that architects and others had a great “fascination with height and attenuation, with visual movement, and with light” as James Trilling, author of *The Language of Ornament*, writes. Though the actual material body of their structures was incredibly heavy in itself that even weightier “massive external buttresses are required to support it,” the stone pillars gives space, for ceiling-high columns of glass in sparkly tracery. These painted panes glitter, filtering in the streaming sunlight in coloured rays, suffusing the aisles with warmth and light, so unlike the strong, fortress-like stone walls of Romanesque work. As art historian Gombrich writes of the style, “everything that was heavy, earthly or humdrum was eliminated. The faithful who surrendered themselves to the contemplation of all this beauty could feel that they come nearer to understanding the mysteries of a realm beyond

the reach of matter”. The pure light that comes in from the seemingly infinitely growing glass rosettes of crimson, gold, green, and ultramarine transcends the holy space that is the Church (think Saint-Chapelle and the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris), creating in it a world that is different to that outside, one filled with a sort of ethereal glory promising of Heaven.

One remembers a similar thrilling sensation when thinking of or visiting mosques. It may be well to begin by quoting Rev. Thompson on the quiet delight in the Eternal that consumes one in a mosque—this case being Kuwait’s Grand Mosque, a worthy destination for those of you who haven’t already been—“The mihrabs [prayer apses, or niches facing the *qibla*, or Mecca] convey a theology to the believer of a created world bridged by the Word into the uncreated world of Paradise—the abode of God / Allah.” The act of bridging the two, bringing closer the Eternal in heaven recalls to mind 10th century Egyptian Fatimid architecture, where an obsession with the light of the Prophet’s family and Heaven showed in architecture. Expression

of this divine light would be manifest in their *mihrabs* and blind arcades, where they would have radiating ribs from a centre point—“the very image of light,” Robert Hillenbrand writes. Also, the famed Fatimid Aqmar Mosque’s façade is adorned with stone openwork, with the names of the Prophet Muhammad and Imam ‘Ali hewn out so that the afternoon light would cast a shadow highlighting the names for pious passers-by to see and remind them of the light permeating their venerated Prophet and family. Even the honeycomb vaulting, or *muqarnas*, that the Safavid dynasty of Persia and others used to mold domes from square halls, express the infinite capacity and eternity of the heavens from the created world below, the multitudes of little niches, each exquisitely fashioned as expressing of great beauty.

Perhaps to one who has studied these in greater detail, such a comparison is naïve, inexpert and erroneous. Naïve perhaps, inexpert certainly, but I know it to be true in the sense that I read it clearly in the responses of other writers, art historians, and persons, that both homes of

holy space project to believers and other visitors a real sense of awe in that the architects surely crafted the walls and roofs, halls and pillars to express their praise for the Creator in their rekindling the feeling of elated joy in His presence. Through their work with corporal, “created” material, they translate that physical beauty into something that speaks of *theosis*, or divine love, that cannot be touched, but intensely felt.

In a world excitingly full of many binary opinions, conflicting opinions, and vivid attempts to make everyone understand things better be it through short films, urgent conversations, best-selling historical-political books, or three-day interfaith dialogues, it might be good to see that in Art, among other things, one can find bridges as Rev. Thompson does, one that allows us to see the grand beauty that the other has to share, and know that one’s own culture is equally brilliant, and though the two may have little in common superficially, one can see that they share spirit.

Boushehri Gallery Exhibition: Abdul-Razzaq Ukasha "Memories"

By Nur Soliman

There are paintings that one sees and forgets as one's gaze floats past it: over-used color schemes, over-exhausted subjects, poses, and themes that have been explored in (nearly) every possible way by local artists for years and years. And then there are paintings that one stands patiently before and looks appreciatively at the genuineness of the feelings expressed—even if they lack originality in form—as well as the interesting draftsmanship or fine arrangement, or simply their boldness. Abdul-Razzaq Ukasha's paintings, for the most part, belonged to the second category, although there remained several paintings that were a bit difficult to appreciate as much. At least, that's what some of us thought when observing his paintings in the well-lit, elegant Boushehri Gallery tucked away at a bend in the road in Salmiya.

Okasha is a well-known Egyptian artist and critic of modern Egyptian formative art,

receiver of a myriad of prestigious awards and chair of several conferences. Known in Paris as "the villager" or "Son of Munoufiyya," an Egyptian province, the artist has been very well received in his new home, France, since migrating there in 1993. Like multitudes of other migrating Arab artists, he was in search of a new environment, a new wealth of ideas. As he says himself, "when I touched base with human issues and universal concerns, my paintings simply reached out to others. My paintings became keys to establishing a bridge that connects me as the artist, and others, as viewers."

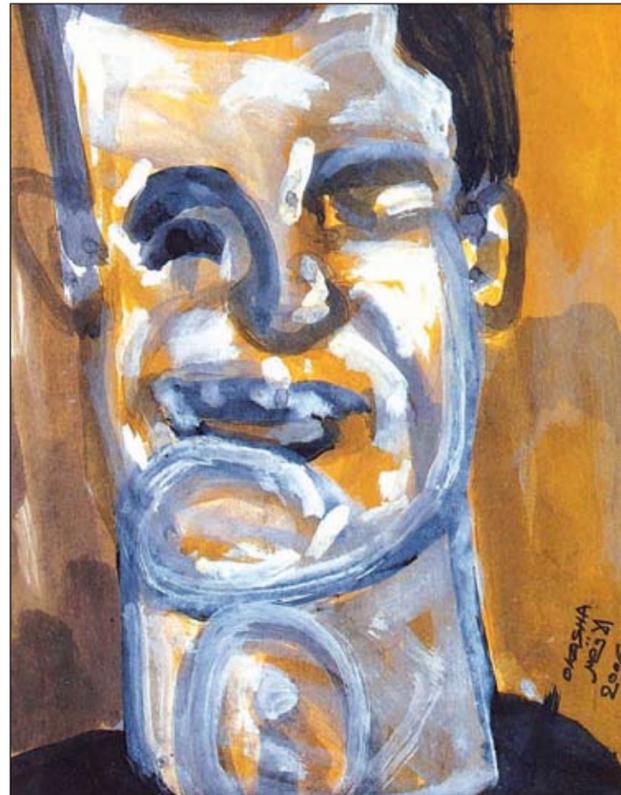
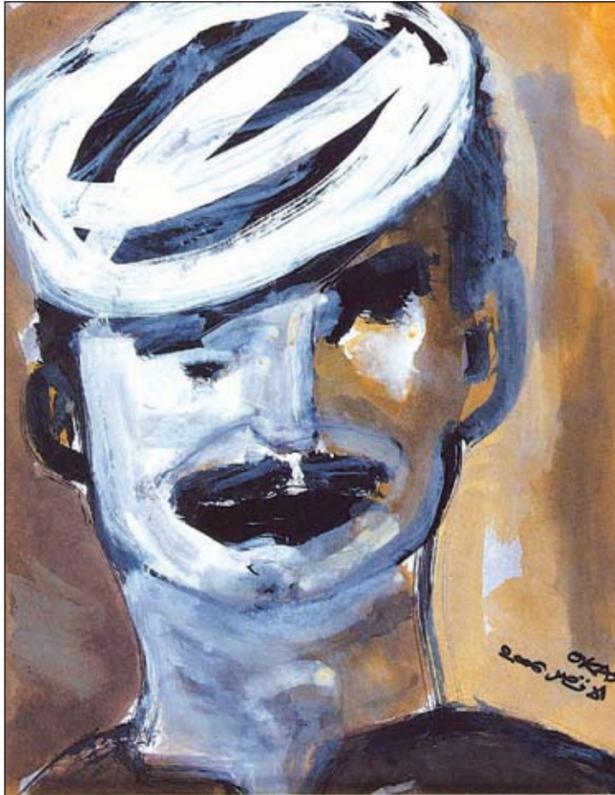
Most of his paintings reflect the vivid memories of his homeland mingled with France, though certainly not all did. Of course, it did not take long for one to look at every painting in the Gallery; 20-odd pictures do not take up much time from a solitary observer and they were only a handful of his doubtlessly huge collection.

At any rate, some of the pic-

es really *did* reflect this fusion of Ukasha's cultures, not letting go of his original identity, yet wholeheartedly embracing his new one, as did the Parisian art circles he. Many paintings were actually done over French province maps or posters, the contour lines and street names showing thinly beneath strokes of greens, browns, and reds. Might they signal the network of French culture that has so permeated his Arab identity, with the image of abstracted women or other figures covering these maps? One of these was a portrait of a Shakespearean figure done in vivid black paint over a Parisian station poster, flanked by bold lemon-yellow strokes, while others were perhaps less vivid and imaginative, like the tall pyramids of village women's heads and torso's, reminiscent of that over-exhausted subject of the wistful, wide-eyed, hard-working Arab woman. It must be said that indeed, his color choices were excellent and he

skillfully blended and juxtaposed these to create appropriate moods; however, in terms of subject, some of these were not so creative and quite flat. That said, his works were suffused with sincere love for the worn labourer's face, or the flushed, serene face of a village-woman though it was not delivered as perfectly as one would have it.

In an article by local writer Fatmah Al-Saffar—which this writer was fortunate to assist in translating—the following anecdote does credit, I think, to Ukasha's colorful, modern folk-style: a Parisian talks about Ukasha's sense of music, saying that "I once asked Ukasha why a musical sensation, or rhythm, cannot be sensed in his work. He was completely surprised ...and replied, 'how can my work be devoid of any music when I am constantly obsessed with the vibration of the verses in my national anthem that resound with *my country, my country, I give you my love and my innermost heart?*'"



Summer Relaxin' with the Miles Davis Quartet

By Nur Soliman

Miles Davis, trumpet. John Coltrane, tenor sax. Red Garland, piano. Paul Chambers, bass. Philly Joe Jones, drums. Van Gelder Studios, remastered 2005. UNIVERSAL (36:00)

This will probably be the coolest CD you'll be playing in your car this summer—literally. Whether you're a Jazz-o-phile or not, the music's clean and simple sophistication is the perfect way to enjoy half an hour or so of joyous jazz.

The album's compilation is a perfect choice for those who prefer anything essentially Miles or inclined towards Dizzy Gillespie. Probably even Coltrane's

name would be enough to interest some of our listeners. Not your Armstrong and Goodman, but it's just as pleasurable.

The first impression one has, particularly with the first track, "If I Were a Bell" and more so the third, the well-loved "I Could Write a Book," is that it is happily the typical Miles Davis one imagines running through their head in the afternoon, not too fast, but enough to indulge in every note for a moment and fully enjoy the pleasure of that note combined with the bass and drums. This sensation continues with the remainder of the 6 tracks, very classic, very cool, with the spare, well-measured—or delightfully

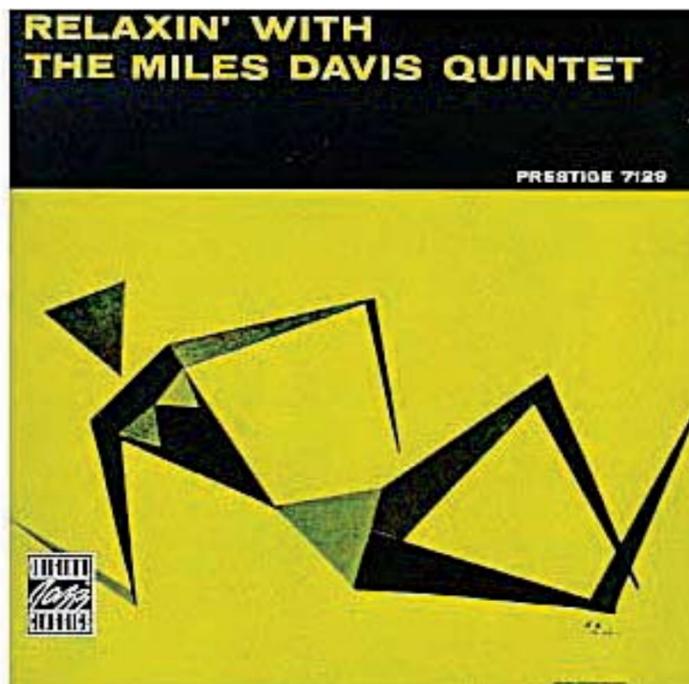
effervescent—piano bars and gentle drums.

The other interesting thing is that beginning and ending some of the tracks are low-toned, sometimes humorous exchange or conversation between the players while recording, making it perhaps more accessible, and more enjoyable. Most tracks have typical Davis motifs and improvisation patterns.

Coltrane punctuates his sequences with occasional solos, one of his most characteristic and enjoyable being in Track 3, "I Could Write a Book." Joe Jones is the perfect percussive accompaniment, keenly sensitive to Davis' style and interspersing the whole of the track with on-

time responses to Davis' trumpet calls. Garland does the same during the brass solos, inserting a motif or chord here and there in perfect sync and foil to Miles' quick-speed playing. The track flourishes with a lovely solo between Davis and Coltrane.

"Woody n' You." Writer of a brief Davis biography Martha Bayles writes, "To the yin of cool, Davis brought rich sonority, blues feeling and swing; to the yang of hard bop, he brought stillness, melodic beauty and understatement." What a perfect definition of Davis, and what a perfect collection it finds in *Relaxin' with the Miles Davis Quintet*, as cool and as hot as late 1950s jazz can be.



Diner to Encourage Healthy Eating Habits

By Dina El-Zohairy

Despite their diverse approaches to weight loss, all diet experts would agree that the key to weight management is striking a balance between energy in and energy out. Carbohydrates, proteins and fats, the main nutrients in food, provide us with the energy, measured in calories, our body needs to perform its basic metabolic functions—e.g. breathing, repairing cells, and circulating blood—and meet the needs of physical activity. Over the long run, any energy imbalance will lead to a change in weight.

As a rough guide, proteins and carbohydrates have about 4 calories a gram, and fats have about 9 calories a gram. Regardless of where they come from, calories you eat are either converted to physical energy or stored within your body as fat. Unless you use these stored calories, they will remain within your body as fat.

Calorie content is one tool used to monitor food intake, but don't make calorie counting an obsession. However, it does help to roughly know what you're getting your body into, and you can learn a lot from a nutrition label. You're likely to underestimate your food intake by up to 30% if you eat without knowing.

In a combined effort to en-

courage healthy food choices among AUK students through knowledge of the calorie content of the diner's offerings, Health & Fitness instructor Astrid Al-Hadeedi and AUK Diner Manager, Ray Smithson, came up with the "traffic light" method of labeling foods.

Ms. Maya Chabaro, nutritionist at the International Clinic, calculated the caloric content of the most popular dishes served in the diner. Accordingly, high-calorie items will be red-coded and low-calorie items green-coded to serve as a guide. Such information is already available for chocolate bars on a card attached to the diner's cash register in easy-to-understand terms. It details the calories in chocolate bars and their equivalent of physical activity.

In addition, a diagram of the most recent USDA Food Pyramid can be found on a large poster on the diner's glass door. Summed up, its dietary guidelines are: make half your grains whole, vary your vegetables, focus on fruits, know your fats, get your calcium-rich foods, and go lean on protein. The staircase on one side of the pyramid indicates the importance of being physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

Given that, it is only wise to seize each and every opportu-

nity to use energy—it all counts. Al-Hadeedi describes physically active people as those who "take the stairs, not elevators, walk briskly around campus for 5 or 10 minutes between lectures, park their cars a little further away from their final destination and walk the last bit." She adds that "[they] know that to be active does not mean they have to go to a gym or get all sweated out in a volleyball game...that six 5-minute sessions of brisk walking and taking the stairs can be the difference between a normal body weight and obesity." This is one of the reasons for the signs posted at the elevators.

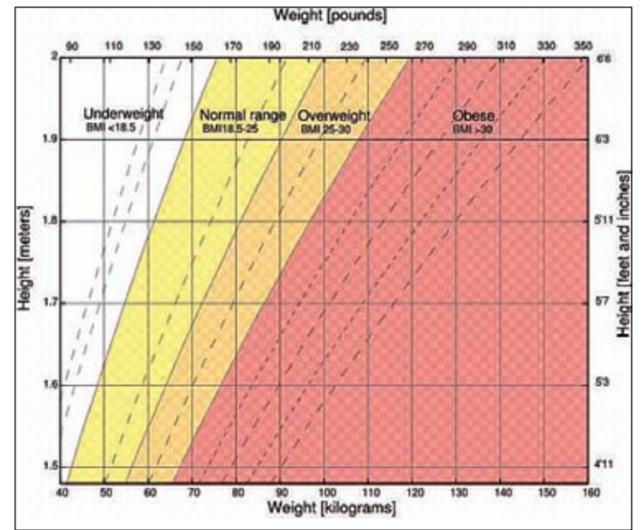
Though based on a much smaller sample, the diner's sales figures correlate with Kuwait's alarming obesity statistics: the majority of students aren't making healthy diet choices. To illustrate, on a typical day, 30 salads are sold compared to about 70 chocolate bars. Less than ten servings of fruit—a recent addition—are sold. On a positive note, 90 hot meals are served—though not necessarily low in calories, include sautéed vegetables, grilled chicken, steamed rice, or fish, according to the lunch menu. Mostly appealing to the males, 60 fast food items (hot dogs, fries, burgers) are in demand on a daily basis. Generally, females are more health-

conscious than males.

Perhaps expectedly, Red Bull is the most popular drink that has quickly become a staple of social life at AUK. Containing 110 calories, this slender blue-and-silver can is rich in caffeine, sugar, sodium and additives. Its sugar-free version only has 10 calories, but is still rich in sodium.

Despite the countrywide sad state of health affairs, there is a glimmer of hope within the AUK community. According to Mr. Ray, students who joined AUK last September seem to be increasingly opting for healthier food choices. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues into the future as more and more children are taught to appreciate the importance of a healthy diet and follow one despite the temptations offered by the numerous restaurants around town.

Another area of concern is "portion distortion," as Al-Hadeedi puts it. Mr. Ray's observations indicate that many AUKers tend to heap their plates with food only to end up wasting most of it. Wastage is *haram*—think of all the malnourished, stunted and sickly children of sub-Saharan Africa who endure lifelong, chronic hunger or die from malnutrition-related causes every day. Furthermore, platefuls of food encourage overeating; it is best to take slightly less



Body Mass Index, or BMI, is a measurement widely used by doctors to identify possible weight problems for adults. To find your BMI find the range where your weight and height intersect on the graph.

than what you think you'll eat and have seconds, if necessary.

The next time you visit the diner, make sure you note the calorie content of what you eat and what percentage of your daily caloric allowance it accounts for. You can roughly estimate your daily calorie requirements by multiplying your weight in pounds (weight in kilos multiplied by 2.205) by 14, 17 or 20 if you're sedentary, moderately active, or very active, respectively. In fact, make it a habit to look up or ask about the calorie composition of your favorite cooked

dish or dessert whenever you eat out; your changed tendencies towards fat- and calorie-laden items may just surprise you.

In the end, your weight, which is largely determined by your lifestyle, does not only put you at greater risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer; it has wider social implications. Obesity is associated with lower socio-economic status and poor education in the developed world. Also, Al-Hadeedi claims that overweight and obese individuals find it more difficult to secure employment than their leaner counterparts!

Western Science vs Eastern Wisdom: The Basics

By Dina El-Zohairy

“The MRI revealed an osteosarcoma: a cancerous tumor in your femur. It needs to be removed surgically. With chemo, [you have] an excellent chance of survival. But I have to warn you, depending on how large the tumor is, and how ingrained it is, the surgeon may need to amputate your leg (House M.D: 1x21, Three Stories).”

The scenario above illustrates some of the main features of the Western or modern approach to medicine: use of sophisticated diagnostic tools (MRI) to identify a specific target that will be directly dealt with (femur) to bombard a disease (cancer) using invasive techniques and powerful agents (surgery, chemotherapy, amputation) that demonstrate antagonism against the unwanted.

Modern medicine is based on deductive empirical science. The cause has to be well known in depth before the specific treatment program is developed to counteract the pathology to be corrected. This has been made possible largely by technological advances.

In contrast, Eastern medicine uses the inductive method. Oriental medical literature in general is a record of practical experience accumulated from millions of practitioners over thousands of years. Also, traditional health systems are grounded in long-standing cultural and spiritual values. For example, traditional Chinese medicine is rooted in Taoism; Ayurveda is based on ideas from Hinduism, while Unani Tibb was developed by the effort of

“The Prince of Physicians” Ibn Sina, called Avicenna in the West, and continues to be used by Muslims in the Indian subcontinent.

A fundamental concept found in many systems is that of balance: balance of internal biological activities (forces) and balance between the individual and his/her outside environment. Treatments are designed not only to address the locus of the disease but also to restore a state of systemic balance to the individual and his or her inner and outer environment. Eastern physicians try “to harmonize, to assist, to encourage, and even to love each person, each patient, and guide him back or her back to the condition of human happiness and wellness (Chishti, p.8).”

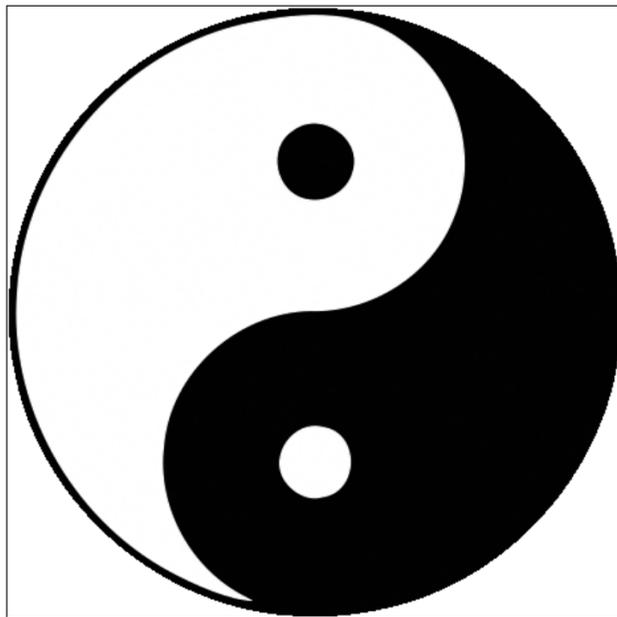
Western practitioners tend to ignore the individual, who is almost treated like machines and their spare parts as loss of holistic care, mechanical approaches and overspecialization plague modern medicine.

The advent of the bacteriological school in the late nineteenth century altered the historical concept of disease. In the past, physicians believed that symptoms indicated some organic malfunction. But with the bacteriological school, this idea was abandoned in favor of the notion that there was a “special cause”—usually a microbe or virus—responsible for the symptom.

While admitting the existence of microbes, traditional systems claim that it is the original imbalance of temperament that provides an altered biotic environment in which these viruses and

bacteria can thrive. A definition of ‘temperament’ as provided by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is “the peculiar or distinguishing mental or physical character determined by the relative proportions of the humors according to medieval physiology.”

Furthermore, the causes of the initial imbalance of temperament are often to be found



in more subtle elements of life, such as rest and activity patterns, work stresses, and interpersonal relations. From the viewpoint of traditional healers, treatments of bacterial populations present in disease conditions may kill off all bacteria and provide a temporary “cure,” but without restoring the humor to its proper balance, the disease will recur, as with the flu.

That said, the theory of hu-

mors—semi-vaporous substances that maintain the proper temperament of the organs—is the heart of the medicine of Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna, of Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine, and of virtually all other traditional systems.

Hippocrates, who is called the Father of Medicine, was the first to set forth the principles of

sense in the body: blood related to air, phlegm relates to water, yellow bile relates to fire, and black bile relates to earth.

In place of the humors, the Chinese believe that all things in creation possess the qualities of *yin* and *yang*, the opposing forces of nature. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is based on a concept of balanced *qi* (pronounced ‘chee’), or vital energy, that is believed to flow throughout the body and regulate a person's spiritual, emotional, mental and physical balance. Disease is proposed to result from the flow of *qi* being disrupted and *yin* (negative energy) and *yang* (positive energy) becoming imbalanced. Among the components of TCM are herbal and nutritional therapy, restorative physical exercises, acupuncture and remedial massage.

Moving to India, Ayurveda is a system of medicine that originated here several thousand years ago. The term Ayurveda is derived from two Sanskrit words—*ayur*, which means life, and *veda*, which means science or knowledge. Ayurveda means “the science of life.” In Ayurveda, three qualities called *doshas* characterize the body's constitution and control its activities. They are *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. Each *dosha* consists of one or two of the five basic elements: space, air, fire, water, and earth, and is associated with a certain body type, personality type, and a greater chance of certain types of health problems. A person has his/her own balance of the three *doshas*, although one is usually prominent. Some of the primary Ayurvedic treat-

ments include diet, exercise, meditation, herbs, massage, exposure to sunlight, and controlled breathing.

Generally, the benefit of prescriptions used in traditional medicine is judged by the effect produced by the whole medical treatment upon the whole person—on the physical, mental, and moral planes of being. In Western medicine, cure is achieved upon the control or reversal of symptoms, which reflect pathological changes.

By way of comparison, the dichotomy that is often suggested is that Western medicine is better at emergency situations and stabilizing patients in crisis, while Eastern medicine has more success with more long-term chronic issues such as pain.

Therefore, it is virtually impossible to establish one system as superior to the other because the founding concepts and beliefs and approaches to disease are different. Suffice to say, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is growing in importance as recipients of health care recognize the shortcomings of modern medicine and cannot afford its ever-rising costs. For instance, the results of a survey conducted by the American Medical Association on the use of alternative medicine toward the end of the twentieth century indicated that the annual medical expenditure on CAM was even greater than that spent on family medicine. The coexistence of traditional and mainstream medicine in Western countries may turn out to be possible after all.

Senior Thesis Presentations

By Farah Al-Shamali

The English Language and Literature program prides itself of its students for their innovation and critical thinking skills. Literature, after all, is not set in stone and is continuously subject to interpretation. They are the jewels of the crown and each shines with her own distinctive light. On 3rd Summer, 2008, seven English Language and Literature majors presented their theses to a body of faculty and students. As they are graduating, they had ultimately focused on a capstone class that would assist them in writing their theses. From the very beginning, the diversity of topics chosen by these young women was quite evocative of their creativity: *The Postmodern Battle After 9/11* (Nadia Karam), *Imam Ali's Visions of Leadership as a Means of Security* (Khairiyah Ahmadi), *Modern Drama, Staging European and American Social Identity* (Fatmah Al-Qadfan), *A Dove Above: Women's Songs in the Pearl Diving History of Kuwait* (Munira Al-Eidan), *A Hundred Years Ahead Of Her Time, Kate Chopan's Interpretation of Depression* (Rowena Al-Mutawa), *Edna, Rosebud, and Snowdrop, Central Transformation Through Sleep* (Latifa Binesa), and *The Misrepresentation of Arab Women By the Arab Media, The Case of Kuwait* (Nouriya Al-Othman).

Nadia Karam, one of the most dedicated and accomplished students at AUK, presented somewhat of a political aspect in her thesis. Essentially, she sought to explain how the highly controversial event of the September 11th bombings of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States has profoundly defined who we are as people. One literary theory, which we had touched upon in that class, was postmodernism and which explains this distorted reality both then and today. Nadia explicitly stated that it has become a battle of identity and ideology. Using *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo and *Windows On The World* by Frederic Beigbeder which both address the harrowing event generating massive waves of criticism. In many instances during Nadia's presentation, the matter of truth was raised. She went on to explain that the matter is inescapably political, and one must question the source as to whether it is truthful or not. This is the point at which postmodernism comes into play—this field of study believes that there is no absolute truth and that one must push for new meanings and definitions to find it. Nadia admitted that the capstone course had been one that she enjoyed because it allowed her to challenge herself with no constraints or obstacles. In the future, she hopes to pursue graduate study and eventually represent the Arab World abroad. Perhaps the most interesting piece of information that I picked up from Nadia is that she believes that she gave herself her identity—that years and years of self-discovery have culminated in who she is today.

Khairiyah Ahmadi, an extremely engaging and serious student, delved into religious examination,

and cleverly looked at the letters of one of the most revered Imams in Shia Islam: Imam Ali. Her approach was to inspect letters that Imam Ali had written regarding the economy at the time while simultaneously creating a comparative analysis with St. Paul's rhetorical strategy while also considering modern textual references such as Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Imam Ali's economic visions are grounded in economic theory. Social class structure is inevitable no matter how hard one attempts to diverge from it. Khairiyah stipulated upon the fact that the issue of equality carried a heavy weight in his letters. Furthermore, human rights and the economic system were based on natural laws. Khairiyah finds that the approach found in the letters of Imam Ali can be applied today to solve the problem of social and economic security by constructing a system that requires faith and substance. While St. Paul speaks to the masses hoping for them to embrace the Christian religion, Imam Ali is more universal in his theme and message not having his teachings, such as social justice and equality, confined to Muslim practice.

Moving on to Fatmah Al-Qadfan, a very active member of the AUK community and editorial board member of the *Voice of AUK*, decided to focus on a part of English Literature that she adores to say the very least: drama. Centralizing on modern drama, she stated that the period of the late nineteenth century to the present has witnessed a rapid increase in social problems as the world has grown more and more violent. People began to vent their anger and frustration on the stage as drama began to deal with larger, more pressing issues. Fatmah emphasized the point that modern drama is the most important because it mirrors the image of a society's flaws and is also reminiscent of naturalism. An absurdist movement had begun to take place—there was "craziness" on stage. This was when the conscience was allowed to break free of all societal conventions. The Second World War yielded a dramatic shift in identities, the emergence of religious skepticism, and the discerning of political power.

Munira Al-Eidan, a devout Kuwaiti national, chose to concentrate on a purely Kuwaiti subject and one is to which Kuwaitis tend to be quite oblivious: the songs women would sing about the arduous journeys that their fathers, husbands, and brothers would face on pearl-diving expeditions miles away from home. Munira painted an incredible picture of Kuwaiti women wishing to become doves to hover over the ships and look after and protect their men. The songs depicted ways in which people lived at that time. Despite popular belief, Kuwaiti women had a tremendous impact on the community that surrounded them. Music was an important source of entertainment since their mobility was restricted. Munira had thought that finding information regarding this topic would be simple but that was certainly not the case. Before anyone had undertaken to look into this topic, people had

commonly thought that it was men men who sang the songs that are so famous today. Munira revealed the fact that Oda Al-Muhanna was the very first to record all of these songs. If it had not been for her, Kuwait would have lost a treasure. Presently, the songs are kept alive through well-known Kuwait folk singers such as Sulaiman Al-Qassar. Munira then artistically ended her presentation by reading one of the traditional songs both in Arabic and English.

Rowena Al-Mutawa discussed the genius that is Kate Chopan. In her novel called *The Awakening*, the main character Edna goes through trying situations as her life ebbs and flows in her efforts to discover her inner being. Rowena finds that the depression that Edna goes through is the same as what is it is defined to be today. At the time that the novel was published, critics found the storyline and characters ridiculous. Years later, it could be sensed that there was much more to Edna's condition than being upset with her lover. That began the journey of analyzing her personality and actions and looking into her physiological nature. Rowena has found that Chopan had wanted her readers to dig deeper into the conceptual framework of depression and had cunningly given rise to its modern definition.

The ingenuity of Latifa Binesa's thesis certainly is to be applauded. In my opinion, her topic was the most unpredictable—in a good way. It shared some degree of similarity with Rowena's topic in that she had chosen to look at Edna in comparison with Rosebud and Snowdrop—popularly known as Sleeping Beauty and Snow White. Sleep is an essential component of all three stories: Latifa finds that sleep is important for they all realize their potential as females. She also relates it the Victorian notion. Latifa believes that all three characters experience an awakening that turns them into more mature women.

Nouriya Al-Othman's assertiveness and apparent passion for the issue she had written about said much about her personality. Looking at newspaper archives and video clips, she extracted sources that spoke of the media representation of Kuwaiti women. Nouriya mentioned that she had conducted her research with rhetorical analysis or how symbols affect the audience. She came to the general conclusion that way in which Arabs view Arab women is the root of the problem. Music video clips are the most striking misrepresentation of Arab women. The common theme that the East and West both share about Arab women is that there are sexual objects—nothing more. The stereotype about Arab women that has spread greatly can only be stopped through education and the knowledge of religion.

The students answered questions from the audience with intellect and defended their arguments. The *Voice* congratulates this wonderful group of women for making it this far and wishes them all the best for their sparkling futures.

ENGL 389 and "The 99"

By Nur Soliman

Brightly colored, shaded prints of Noura, Jabbar, and Munita adorned the pages of a SaudiAramco magazine article not too long ago, and covered pages in an edition of Newsweek. Stands in bookstores, department stores, Sultan Centre, and others flaunt glossy, attractive editions of the comic book series in rows, eagerly snatched by the little hands of boys and girls alike, in their early teens. Yes, the comic strip here is none other than The 99, a series created by Kuwaiti writer-psychologist Dr. Naif Al-Mutawa and that has slowly taken Kuwait's youth, and indeed youth worldwide, by storm. Founder of Teshkeel Comics, Al-Mutawa thoroughly delighted some of us in our early years with his UN Children's Book Award-winning "To Bounce or Not to Bounce," a beautiful black-and-white publication, charmingly illustrated and meant to advocate tolerance for those that are different because there is a certain joy in that diversity as bound by respect.

Today, Al-Mutawa advocates the same spirit of tolerance for others in his comic series The 99, full of super-heroes, each imbued with an attribute of the 99 Beautiful Names of God as preserved in mysterious Nour jewels that have protected the ancient knowledge of the Baghdad's precious library Dar Al-Hikma which housed books of Islamic thought, Greek philosophy, and the like. The super-heroes, progressively 99 in total, come from various backgrounds, races, class, where no explicit mention of faith is made except through the goodness of their action. From the Portuguese Munita, the Deadly one, or the Emirati Noura, or Light, from the Indonesian Fattaah, or

Opener, to the Hungarian Jami', or Assembler, all of these characters embody an aspect of the Names as can be manifest in human character, and use those qualities to fight evil.

Such characters, story-lines, purpose, and motivations filled 16 weeks' worth of work for a class at AUK, namely ENGL 389, a Special Topic class entitled "Comics and Superheroes: The 99." Taught by AUK Professor of English Language and Literature, Dr. Rawda Awwad, this 300-level course examined the nature of the comic series, its impact on the media, society's response to them, and finally the purpose or meaning behind these comics. On the evening of June 2nd, Dr. Rawda organized a conference, in fact the class's final exam, hosting Dr. Naif Al-Mutawa himself, and representatives from the US Embassy, including Counselor for Public Affairs and long-time Arabian studies scholar, Dr. John Berry and the Cultural Attaché Joe Scovitch. They were all invited to engage in conversation and debate surrounding comics in general, and their impact on the nature of children, and more importantly The 99 as they have been distributed in Kuwait and worldwide, and to listen to presentations of unique Arab comic series that the students themselves had worked on semester-long, highlighting the character guides, purpose, motivation, and structure they were looking for.

Dr. Rawda prompted the first part of the mini-conference's discussion by asking all of her students, as well as Dr. al-Mutawa and the US Embassy Cultural officers to list down their earliest super-hero, why they liked them, and what qualities were admired and perhaps implemented. By asking

Dr. Berry to offer his own answers to the class, several students' hands went up to ask different questions, ultimately leading to different arguments, such as the effects of heroes in video-games as opposed to comic books, or Superman's original religious identity – as was linked to the 99er's pseudo-religious identity – all to promote great human values or tolerance. Dr. Berry stressed, in his clear, conversational tone, that the importance of these characters, in response to student's questions, is to carry these across to children in an appealing, interactive way. This in turn led to Dr. Naif al-Mutawa's discussing how the whole idea of The 99 came about when he was discussing the prospect of illustrated stories with his sister, Samar, when in England. This sparked evident interest in the students while arguing for the identity of the 99ers, their religious connotations, and indeed, their marketing capacity, which proved to be tremendous, encouraging the eloquent al-Mutawa to call his investment "Kuwait's second biggest export."

To conclude, Dr. Rawda asked that the students present, for a minute each, their comic series projects as they have been working on them all semester. The groups presented series that were delightfully unique and very varied in character design, settings, ideas, and approaches; however, all strove to encourage religious, ethnic, class tolerance in an Arab context, and foster better work ethics, morality, and energy in Kuwait's youth. After their weeks of studying al-Mutawa's The 99, it was refreshing to see another dozen or so comic series that emerged with equal vividness of character and spirited enthusiasm, all to change society, one panel at a time.

Music, Art, Drama: Not Counted

By Nur Soliman

For some children we know—and we may be some of these—Maths classes often meant a chance to exercise some of your best shading skills and draftsmanship, discreetly working away at a miniature masterpiece in pencil while pretending to ponder over fractions. Or some of us may have spent more time practicing your flute solo and band arrangements than your homework... Writing stories instead of revising Arabic grammar... Devoting your whole soul and energy on the school play, learning your lines hidden under your science notes... All of these are often the passions of brilliant students, but ones their teachers may have shaken their heads wistfully at, saying sometimes that they ought to focus more on their Business, Geography, or Physics. Indeed, the hard sciences are a great discipline to master, and one that elicits great respect once you've understood them. But the great attention lavished on these hard sciences in this region and certainly others has paled the soft sciences, or humanities by comparison. "You like drawing, eh? Well, leave that for when you're done getting that degree in business like we agreed, son." Sometimes the parents are actually quite sympathetic about their child's acting or singing or painting talents, but sadly admit that he/she

will go *nowhere* with these.

But are these disciplines really that vague, uncertain, spontaneous and unprofessional? Professor Christopher Gottschalk, professor of Drama and Theatre at AUK suggests that other disciplines offer a greater guarantee of success than do the arts, and thus demand that importance. As a liberal arts institution, Gottschalk emphasized, AUK has arranged its priorities to help produce capable students in the critical thinking sphere, be it in business, marketing, accounting, or communications, resulting in a diminutive collection of courses dedicated to say, Music, Art History, or Drama. "That's not necessarily a bad thing," he remarks, "as this is the vision of the administration in giving Kuwait able, active individuals in the workforce... [which is] AUK's set growth pattern in Kuwait's society, but they've taken the first excellent step in having the arts. The fact is, we've begun." And Gottschalk is absolutely correct. To date, there are several 100-level Drama and Music courses, and there have been several Drawing and Color classes as well as four different Art History classes. And they've been responded to enthusiastically for the most part. But even if not, Gottschalk says, "if we can make a strong, deep impact on one student, only one student, then we've done a good job."

And they *are* important. Gottschalk listed the three main skills, or

Trivium, that the Greeks taught their students: logic, oratory, and rhetoric. That is, "how to make sense in one's ideas, what to say, and how to say it well." And such skills can only be gained in Rhetoric or language classes, creative art classes, drama, and music. "And look at the skills you get from these classes," Gottschalk says with enthusiasm: "knowing how to work together—how to play with others in a band, creativity—thinking in different, new ways, problem-solving, and communication of one's thought s in various forms." Those are skills that one can best gain from the arts, Gottschalk says, and are part and parcel of AUK's mission to help shape creative critical thinkers, skills that can stretch over every form of discipline and any professional field.

A message from Gottschalk to the students who study here and who love nothing better than an empty sheet of paper and a brush, or a catchy tune and script: "Knowing in or believing in that calling... demands great courage and determination," considering that success is shaky. "If you *have* to do it, then go for it." Knowing how to express oneself well is a gift, and even if one does not end up living the Bohemian paradise in a small room in Paris, one can translate those beautiful skills and manners of thinking into all disciplines, enhancing them and one's own consciousness of the world as they see it.

Farewell Fatmah Q - Scholar, Mentor, Friend

By The Voice Editorial Board

The Voice of AUK's Editorial Board says goodbye this semester to one of its founding members. Fatmah Al-Qadfan was one of a large group of students who attended the Voice of AUK's first organizational meeting in September 2004; she is the only member of that original group who remained actively involved throughout her 4 years at AUK.

Fatmah made substantial contributions to each of the Voice's 23 issues to-date, now as a writer, now as copy-editor, sometimes just as senior Editorial Board member offering moral support and guidance. She was also one of the prime movers in defining the Voice's organizational charter and editorial policy. The wit and charm of her writing style have been one of the hallmarks of the editorial tenor of the Voice; her strength of character and commitment one of the gatekeepers of its quality.

As a pious Muslim thriving in a secular environment of extreme intellectual diversity, Fatmah represents the embodiment of the liberal arts principles outlined in AUK's Mission Statement and Statement of Principles. Through her activities with the Voice, she demonstrated a deep commitment to those principles and a will to foster them in others—on occasion even in the absence of institutional support.

Fatmah was also well respected by faculty and fellow students alike. Editorial Board colleague,



Fatmah Al-Qadfan (far right) with her writing center colleagues.

Nur Soliman, says of Fatmah that she is "honored to be her friend," describing her as "usually calm, but full of a vivid effervescence." Nur hopes that Fatmah will "remember nightly board-member email exchanges, hurried deadlines, and the laughs

that turned up in between!"

Writing Center Director Mary Queen, with whom Fatmah worked as a writing consultant for two years, notes Fatmah's "outstanding academic achievement (Dean's List, seven consecutive se-

esters), critical intelligence, initiative, adaptability to multiple cultural contexts, excellent communication skills, commitment to AUK's development, leadership in a broad range of extracurricular activities, and collegial manner."

According to Dramatic Arts professor Christopher Gottschalk, Fatmah also demonstrated a "passion and commitment to the arts", working as Stage Manager and Assistant Director for the AUK Theatre Program's 2007 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, noting further that without her "dedication and tireless efforts" the completion of the play would not have been possible.

Fatmah graduates with a Bachelor's degree with a double major in English Literature and Anthropology, having successfully defended her honors thesis on American and European cultural identities through their representations in Modern Drama of the 20th Century.

Fatmah intends to further her education, having been accepted into the graduate Medical Anthropology program at the University College, London. However, she has deferred for a year to travel to the USA as a Fulbright scholar, where she will be teaching Arabic at Jackson State University in Mississippi.

We bid you a fond farewell, Fatmah Q; AUK and its Voice will not be quite the same without you, but we are better for the gifts you shared.

Olympic Level Competitors Dua'a and Ammar

By Shareefa Al-Adwani

American football, British rugby, and international boxing are NOT full-contact sports. Footballers wear helmets, rugby players are not allowed to strike one another, and even boxers wear gloves. Kyokushin, a style of Martial Arts from Japan, IS a full-contact sport. While sparring with an opponent, delivering and receiving full-strength kicks and punches are the norm. A Kyokushin Martial Artist does not wear any leg, foot, arm, hand, or head protection. Receiving a powerful kick to the head or punch to the solar plexus can mean a bad day for your average person.

There are some, though, that push themselves to be beyond average. A black belt in Kyokushin takes years to attain. Students must pass dozens of tests, memorize many katas (Martial Arts choreographed movements, punches, and kicks), and spar with hundreds of others, and will only receive advancement if their instructor or a special committee decides to pass the Kyokushin student.

Dua'a Husain, a graduating senior at AUK, has a Second Dan Black Belt in Kyokushin. This has allowed her to become a Kyokushin instructor at the local Power Center—at the young age of 20! Furthermore, she is already qualified to judge Kyokushin competitions in Kuwait.

In the true spirit of dedication, Dua'a has, over the years, increased the difficulty of her training which involves running, weightlifting, sparring, katas, and conditioning. She began her involvement in Kyokushin at the age of five, and has continued in the sport for more than fifteen years. Last year, she had trained for two hours a day, every day. She rarely is able to spar against women for training purposes, yet Dua'a is not the type to shy away or quit. She simply spars against men—and does not blink an eye when saying so. For Dua'a, solid training is the priority, as she is now participating in international competitions.

She trains with Sensi Baha Al-Omran, who has since become a father figure to her after the many years of her involvement in the sport. His support has led her to be involved in the International Friendship Karate Tournament, held in April 2008. It hosts hundreds of Kyokushin Martial Artists to

participate in a two day competition, and it will be Dua'a's second time participating in this tournament at this level. She had previously entered into a world competition in 2005 for youths and reached the semi-finals. However, for this 2008 competition, she was no longer competing against other youths, but instead was going to sparring against adults. During March 2008, she trained three times a day to prepare for the international level of competition she would be facing.

Dua'a's was the only Kuwaiti female to fly to Japan and participate in the tournament. Competing in the Women's Lightweight Division, she fought her first two-minute round against a Kyokushin female Martial Artist from Bulgaria. After the round was over, Dua'a won, which gave her the confidence of knowing that her difficult training had been worth it all. Her next competitor was against a Kyokushin female Martial Artist from Japan—the same competitor to whom she had lost in the tournament the year before. After the



first round, the judges called a tie. After the second round of sparring, the judges stated that the Japanese contestant had won, despite the fact that Dua'a scored more points (punches and kicks that contact the other competitor are

given points).

At the end of the sparring, though, the competitors always shake hands and congratulate one another. The contestant from Japan praised Dua'a, noting Dua'a's continued improvement over the last year. Dua'a has taken this tournament to be one of many to come, and continues to train for her upcoming competitions.

After appearing on Tawa Al-Layl, a talk show on Al Watan TV, Dua'a has secured sponsorship by Sheikha Naeima Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, a member of the Kuwait Olympic Committee. The Sheikha has volunteered to sponsor Dua'a participation in international tournaments, allowing one of Kuwait's truly talented citizens to represent her country on an official level. Dua'a hopes to see other talented individuals in Kuwait receive encouragement for their skills as well, emphasizing, "Any talent should be encouraged by society. It gives the individual a chance to find themselves, and will benefit the society overall."

Casually strolling to class or hanging out with his friends, Ammar Bin Eid takes a patient approach to life at AUK. He has just started undergraduate courses this past Fall and has been a part of the starting lineup of the AUK Men's volleyball team for two years. He is also involved in the Anti-Segregation Committee (ASC) and assists the University with PAR testing. Although academics, politics, and sports all involve difficult situations being presented to students, Ammar is easily able to adapt to situations and negotiate through problems.

Sitting down outside the Liberal Arts building and leaning against the wall, Ammar can often be found talking to his friends and enjoying a good joke. Another student may pass by, glancing in his direction, and know that Ammar is "a great volleyball player" or "an organizing force of the ASC." What many do not know is that Ammar Bin Eid has won over 700 medals in swimming on behalf of Kuwait.

Ammar began swimming at the age of 7 and received his first medal competing at the Dammam School competition at the age of 9—the same age he joined the Kuwait national team. He would rise at dawn each morning and



begin the day swimming hundreds of meters in the pool. After his training, he would head off to school, joining the other students who had perhaps spent their early morning hours enjoying several more hours of sleep. Ammar, however, found peace of mind in the water. Each time he would swim, his mind would clear: It was just Ammar and the water.

On 29 – 31 August 2004, Ammar competed in Abu Dhabi, UAE in the Gulf Competition. Ammar had ten races to swim, and won nine Gold medals and one Silver medal, setting a new regional record in the 50 meters (butterfly stroke). As a versatile swimmer, Ammar is able to participate in both "short course" and "long course" races (50, 100, 200, and 400 meter races).

The next year, at the Gulf Competition held in Kuwait, Ammar won five Gold medals and seven Silver medals, both in "short course" and "long course" races. Additionally, Ammar had set a new regional record in the 100 meters (free style

stroke).

Ammar, however, was not able to participate in the 2006 Gulf Competition. That year, Ammar had suffered from a knee injury and could not walk. He was flown to Hungary where he had surgery and received treatment for his leg. Although he stayed in Hungary for almost two months, Ammar returned back to Kuwait and jumped back into the water, slowly rebuilding his strength. Although it was the water and swimming that had caused his leg to become injured in the first place, Ammar also realized that it would be the water and strength training that would heal his knee.

This March, Ammar was involved in the 2008 Sea Competition in Bahrain—a competition that was quite different from the Gulf Competitions in that he would not be swimming in a pool, but in the sea! This "open water" competition required the participants to swim an eight-kilometer endurance race. Swimming in the sea is quite different

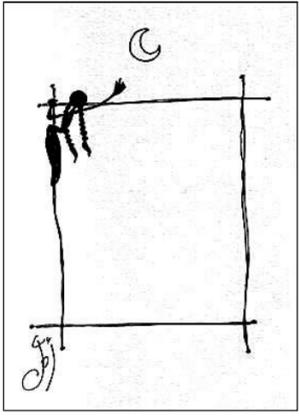
from swimming in pools. Competitors must deal with waves, fish, and sea salt, and continue swimming until they reach the end of the race (the shore). Unlike a pool, the sea does not have a nearby ladder to walk out of the water when

the swimmer feels tired. In that race, Ammar won three Gold medals and one Silver medal.

His upcoming competition in Kuwait occurs on 29 – 31 August, swimming the 50-meter butterfly, the 50 and 100-meter freestyle, and the 200 and 400-meter medley. A competition in February will be at the Olympic level, as he has been chosen to compete against swimmers from China, Thailand and Australia. Formally representing Kuwait (as he has done since he was nine), if Ammar wins that competition, Kuwait will qualify to the next round, taking him to the Olympics. Kuwait places its hope in Ammar's determination and ability to make a mark on the world at the upcoming Olympic Games.

Ammar, competing on such a high level, is extremely modest about his success. At AUK, his easygoing nature allows him to take the time to relax on the benches outside the buildings of AUK. During competitions, however, Ammar is never on the bench.

ميرون أمل كعوش المتشحة سواداً



الابن: هادا سؤال بينسأل بعد ٣٠ سنة نضال هادا؟
مهما كانت التحليلات، تحتاج ميرون أمل كعوش نبشاً أكثر لخلق مواطن نبض خاصة بها، تتحتها بحرفية أكثر بحيث تترك مجالاً للخريشة أكثر وبكثافة متقنة تحيي المساحات البيضاء. للاطلاع على المزيد من الرسومات، هنا مدونة/دفتر رسم أمل:
ميرون: قرية أمل كعوش في فلسطين.

يبدو على أمل كعوش تأثرها بخطوط كتاب ناجي العلي "من أجل هذا قتلوني" والذي يحوي ابداعاته التي كلفته حياته لصدفها. فكان "ميرون" تناص لشخصية "حنظلة" التي دوما ما تعبر عن اليأس من الواقع العربي بحيث لا تظهر ملامحه للمتلقين بل يكتفي بوضعية تكاد تكون أشبه بتوثيق حالة معينة ملؤها غضب صامت. "ميرون" تأخذ ذات الوضعية أحياناً مخبئة ملامحها، مكتفية بالتركيز على حضور الجدليتين كجزء من تكوين الشخصية.
من الكاريكاتيرات التي تستحق التأمل، رسم عنوانه أمل بـ "يا ليل". كقراءة انطباعية، أحسست بصوت فيروز يسبقني إليه لما تقول: حبيبي بدو القمر، والقمر بعيد، والسما عالية، ما بتطاله الإيد، وطلعت عالسطح... تلك الخطوط المترامية المائلة قليلاً، وتسلق ميرون على الخط وصولاً للسطح يوحي وكأنها ليلاب تشفق على جذع أو سور ما.
أيضاً، ذكرني رسم أمل بمقطع من مسرحية (كاسك يا وطن) لمحمد الماغوط ودرديد لحسام. يسأل الأب الشهيد ابنه، مجازاً، فيقول:
"لك ولدي في شغلة بدي أسالك عنها بس مستحي بعد هالسنين الطويلة.. فلسطين أكيد رجعتوها لأهلها؟"



خلاله إيجاد بقعة ضوء.
رغم البساطة ومحاولة اجتناب الدفء من فنجان القهوة على يسار (ميرون) ذات الجدليتين في رسم "رايت رام الله"، هنالك أمل يبدو منحسراً بفعل الشاشة المرئية والتي تبدو كحاجز يشق عمداً وراءه إضافة

الكاريكاتير إلى التعبير بعبارة آتية. انطباعاتها الكاريكاتيرية هي انعكاس لواقعية ما تحياها: ما بين التخاذل العربي وصمته عما يحدث في العواصم العربية التي باتت تسقط تباعاً، واقع المرأة وحقيقتها يومها الذي نذرت لها السنة في الثامن من أيار/مايو، حق العودة المستلب، ظلام الشتات والنفي الضمني، إلى جانب الاشتغال على تضمين التساؤل عن حال القراءة بعد ظاهرة الـ Facebook. هي أمل كعوش (١٩٨٠). الفائزة مؤخراً بالمركز الأول في (مسابقة حنظلة للرسم الكاريكاتيري) والتي أعدت خصيصاً لذكرى مرور ٦٠ عاماً على نكبة الـ ٤٨. كانت هذه المسابقة ضمن فعاليات مهرجان الربيع الذي أقيم في كل من القاهرة وبيروت في أيار/مايو ٢٠٠٨. الرسم الفائزة عنوانه "مستقاة من رواية الفلسطيني مريد البرغوثي "رايت رام الله". في هذا الكاريكاتير، تستمخ أمل عذراً من الكبير مريد استقاء العنونة لاطلاقها على خريشاتها التي اصطفت بتأثيرات آتية، أي استخدام طريقة الكرتونية للوصول افتراضياً ورؤية مدينة رام الله، والتي غالباً ما تكون محاصرة وتعاين أيام الشتات والانقسام على السدات في ظل وضع سياسي مزرٍ يكون من الصعب فيه ومن



بقلم: اسراء الشمري
هو إذن الوجد عندما يكتبها. أما هي، فلسطينية من سكان مخيم عين الحلوة في لبنان. رسامة كاريكاتورية تترجم انفعالاتها الداخلية خطأ مرسوماً ببساطة يزهدا ربط الموضوع بالكلمات بُعداً أدبياً وفتياً على حد سواء. وكأن الخط وحده وحضور "ميرون" الشخصية المحور، لصيبة ولربما طفلة ذات جدليتين منسابتين على كتفها، ليس كافياً. حيث تتعداه صاحبة

الكورس الصيفي.....والحر القاتل

في هذا الجو المرهق نفسياً غير الدراسة التي سترهق الجسم عقلياً وبدنياً، وهذا غير أن الكورس الصيفي بالنسبة لنا كطلبة مستجدين في الجامعة سيكون طويل جداً نسبياً حيث أن مستوى اللغة الانجليزية سيأخذ عطلتنا الصيفية كلها تقريباً، فلا راحة لنا قبل الانتهاء من كورسات الانجليزي المرهقة لننتقل فيما بعد إلى مرحلة الدراسة الحقيقية قبل التخرج، فجمعنا تأخذنا أحلامنا الوردية إلى التخرج وحمل ذكريات جميلة جمعنا مع زملائنا وزميلاتنا في الجامعة الأمريكية.
ولكن ما الحل مع الحر القاتل؟
ليس لنا إلا آمالنا في الانتهاء من كورس اللغة، فهذا الحلم فقط ما سيصيرنا على أجواننا المميزة كل صيف.

بقلم: جمانة الطيب
لا غنى عن الكورس الصيفي، وأسمى منذ دراستي السابقة أن لا أفوت على نفسي أي اجتهاد يقلل سنوات دراستي في أي مؤسسة أكاديمية في سبيل أن أنتهي من الدراسة لأنتقل لمؤسسة أكاديمية أخرى، ولكن هناك مشكلة تعرفل علينا نحن كطلبة جميع مخططاتنا في تحقيق هذا الانجاز (ألا وهو الانتهاء من بعض المواد في مدة أقل من المقررة أصلاً) وهو جونا الحار (أقصد القاتل) لانا في الكويت نعيش الفصول الأربعة في اسبوع واحد أي يتأرجح الأسبوع ما بين المطر والغيار والهواء والجو الربيعي الجميل فما الحل؟
الدوام الدراسي في الفصل الصيفي متعب جدا بحكم الاستيقاظ بوقت باكراً صباحاً

ذلك المسرح. أحمل جزءاً منها ضمن الكلمات.
رغم كل هذه الروحانية في المكان، يؤخذ على نشاطات المجلس الوطني للثقافة والفنون والآداب بعض من علامات الخجل عندما يأتي الأمر للإعلان عن هكذا أنشطة بكثافة عبر وسائل الإعلام بكافة أشكالها. يتم الاكتفاء بطرق بسيطة، لا تصل لكم كبير من المتلقين ما عدا المهتمين والذين يبحثون عن سبيل للاطلاع على المشهد الثقافي في الكويت. حبذا لو تمت استضافة كم أكبر من النشاطات التي من شأنها أن تخلق ما يسمى بالمشهد الثقافي. إن كان مشهداً، فهو متعثر بمحدوديته.

ما بين روحانية سحرته وتعثر "المشهد الثقافي"

كففضة روحية لمن شهد لمعبة الغزالي. فلقد شدتني صورة حية في المقعد أمامي لشخص لربما في الستينيات من العمر، كان منغمساً بشجن من نوع غريب، وكأنه استفاق للتو على ضرورة الانتقال من واقعية باردة إلى دفء الذاكرة الغائبة الحاضرة في أن معاً. كان يرنو للسقف تارة وأخرى على المسرح. كانت بضع دقائق ولكنها ستبقى في الجزء المتبقي من ذاكرتي المتقوية. ستبقى ريمًا لتقاطع صوت سحر الذي يخلق حالة فوضوية إلى جانب عزف الكمان الذي لا يمكن اختزاله. عزف الكمان والعود المصاحب، مشهد انسجام واستفاقة أحد المتلقين، وصوت سحر...كلها تقاطعت لتخلق ذاكرة في

الذي استمر لبضعة أيام (٨-١٢، حزيران/يونيو). احتضن مسرح مركز عبدالعزيز حسين الثقافي-مشرف، التراث العراقي واللبناني صوتاً وعزفاً: مصطفى سعيد (عود)، أحمد شيو (كمان)، غسان سحاب (قانون)، أحمد الخطيب (إيقاع)، وبشار فران (غيتار باص).
غنت سحر طه ناظم الغزالي، ودبع الصافي، لور دكاش، نجاح سلام، وكثير.
ناظم الغزالي، روحه كانت حاضرة في (طالعة من بيت أبوها. عبرتي بالشيب. حياك بابا. خايف عليها. فوق النخل) كلها خلقت تفاعلاً خاصاً من قبل الحضور. وكان الموسيقى جاءت

بقلم: اسراء الشمري
التباس الهوية وشتات الذات، يحتاج لصقل إما بكتابة أو بنحت. النحت هنا يمكن أن يكون عزفاً ليس فقط على أوتار معينة، وإنما بتعداها ملامساً الروح. إذن، نخلص لنتيجة العزف الروحاني. وكيف إن كان مصاحباً بصوت شجي يخلق حالة شجن متلازمة لدى المتلقي حتى وإن غادر المكان الذي عانق هذا الصوت!
هذا وصف للحظات معينة، كانت بصحبة وقع صوت سحر طه، المغنية اللبنانية الجنسية العراقية الأصل والهوى. كان الانتماء والهوى انعكاساً أساسياً لليلة الثالثة من مهرجان الموسيقى الدولي الحادي عشر

AUK-er of the Month: Dr. Conerly Casey

By Walah Al-Sabah

Dr. Conerly Casey is an assistant Professor of Anthropology in the American University of Kuwait. She gained her PhD in 1997 from the University of California at Los Angeles. Dr. Casey has a master's degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of Southern California, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Vermont. Dr. Casey has tremendous research expertise and has been a Senior Research Associate in the Drug Abuse Research Center in California. Dr. Casey is a member of the African Studies Association, American Anthropological Association, Association for Political and Legal Anthropology as well as the Society for Psychological Anthropology.

Her honors and awards include the Guggenheim Research Award, Association for Political and Legal Anthropology Student Essay Prize, Hortense Fishbaugh Memorial Scholarship Dissertation Year Award, a Research award for Social Psychiatry and many others. Dr. Casey has also published numerous books and articles. One her most famous books, co-written with Robert Edgerton, is *A Companion to Psychological Anthropology* which has won the title of "Out-

standing Academic Title of the Year and Academic Book" in 2005. Her articles include "Suffering and the identification of Enemies in Northern Nigeria" as well as "Schizophrenia and Witchcraft in Northern Nigeria". She also contributed to the famous *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*, a book which assesses cases of genocide throughout history. She was explicitly thanked by the famous Anthropologist Alexander Laban Hinton for her contribution to this ground-breaking book.

In addition to her scholarship, Dr. Casey also has a great deal of clinical experience, having served as a Crisis Clinician for the Howard Center for Human Services in Burlington, Vermont, director of the Drug and Alcohol Triage and Consultation Service of Boston City Hospital, and a Senior Counselor in the Berkeley Academy for Youth Development.

Dr. Casey is a respected scholar in the field of medical and psychological anthropology; her contributions are many. She has created a name for herself, and is respected by the most experienced scholars in the field.

How did you become interested in the field of medical anthropology?

I became interested in medical

and psychocultural anthropology while working as a clinician at Vermont Medical Center and Boston City Hospital. Working with patients in psychiatric crisis, I began to notice that doctors, most of whom were male and Caucasian, tended to give women and people of color more severe diagnoses than men. This was especially evident in cases involving immigrants whose English language skills and cultural understandings of health and illness varied significantly from those of the doctors who treated them. It prompted me to enter a Ph.D. program in Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles and to start research on culture and medicine in Kano, Nigeria.

You have conducting fieldwork in Northern Nigeria, particularly in Hausa; please tell us about your experience there.

I have conducted two major research projects in Nigeria. The first, my dissertation research, was an evaluation of mental, emotional and spiritual ill health among Muslim Hausa living in northern Nigeria. Unlike in the United States and most of Europe, people in northern Nigeria do not separate mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical realms of experience. Most Nigerians

have a holistic approach to ill health and, to restore health, they attempt to remedy imbalances in all of these areas of life.

I spent five years working with various healers—Qur'anic scholar-healers, head witches and heads of Bori, a fusion of indigenous and Islamic religions, who had clinics for witchcraft affliction and spirit possession, and psychiatrists trained in biomedicine. After three years of studying their diverse diagnostic approaches, I observed healers and doctors working with patients who were experiencing first ever episodes of severe mental, emotional or spiritual distress. Most patients received diagnoses of both schizophrenia and witchcraft, utilizing biomedical and traditional forms of treatment simultaneously. My research showed that while the symptoms of schizophrenia and witchcraft were similar, the meanings and experience of the symptoms were vastly different, with higher rates of recovery among Nigerians who opted for traditional treatments for witchcraft.

My second project grew out of the first since many people I met with ill health were young Muslim Hausa who had been perpetrators and victims of violence. Over a three year period, I investigated the ways in

which aggression among Muslim Hausa youths was transmuted into ideologies of martyrdom, and is used to justify witchcraft, social banditry, ethnic, religious violence, and fighting for, and against, the state. This research coincided with a burgeoning media industry in Nigeria, the implementation of Shari'a criminal codes in twelve states of northern Nigeria, and large-scale violence. Consequently, I have written several articles and book chapters about the politics of identity and violence within the global contexts of Muslim Hausa life.

How did you hear about the American University of Kuwait? And what made you choose this university to further your teaching experience?

I saw an advertisement for faculty positions at the American University of Kuwait on the Chronicle of Higher Education website. I was interested in this region because much of the funding for religious education and social services in northern Nigeria during the mid-1990s had come from people in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. I wanted to understand more about the connections between the people of northern Nigeria and this region and to better educate myself about cultural diversity in the

Middle East.

Throughout your teaching experience at AUK, what are valuable lessons you have learned and still continue to learn?

I have really enjoyed teaching at AUK. I have learned that students at AUK are as diverse and as hopeful for bright futures as students anywhere. Students at AUK have taught me a great deal about Kuwait and the region by bringing fascinating cultural information into our class discussions. Understanding how the knowledge I teach resonates with the experiences of Kuwaiti students has been valuable, intellectually and personally.

What are lessons that you would like to give for the students in AUK who major in Anthropology and will deal with this field in the future?

Anthropology is a field for the global future. Changes in the frequency and amount of cultural communication, media and travel, have brought with them new opportunities and challenges for all of us. Anthropologists, in that we specialize in the study of cultures, have unique methods and modes of understanding that will be increasingly valuable in areas such as education, health care, law, business, and humanitarian assistance.

June 2008

Dear AUK Community:

Spring semester 2008 marks the completion of the senior year in the four-year cycle of the AUK undergraduate degree. The June 22 Commencement is the culmination of programs initiated in Fall 2004 and a celebration of almost five years of work by dedicated staff, faculty, and administrators who helped the Class of 2008 to reach graduation. On May 6, 2008 fifteen AUK employees were recognized for five years of service to AUK at the Annual Employee Dinner. Our students have done very well during this academic year, as evidenced by the growing number of those reaching the Dean's List status (212) and making the President's Honor Roll (28). Students' academic and extracurricular achievements were celebrated also on the Awards Night, held on May 22. Individuals and student groups (such as Model United Nations Club) were recognized in front of their families, friends, and faculty. The quality of award nominees this year was outstanding, and I was very pleased to choose this year's graduate Hamad Mohammed for the President's Award. Students also presented their own awards to the Most Supportive Faculty/Staff, the Innovative Lecturer, and the Faculty/Staff Mentor. To cap the year's success, AUK athletic teams won the private universities' Championship Cup for the third year in a row. Congratulations to all the award winners!

The Dartmouth Connection

This Spring AUK's links with our cooperating institution, Dartmouth College (in Hanover, New Hampshire) are being recognized at the highest level. The Provost of Dartmouth College Dr. Barry Scherr will be the keynote speaker at the Commencement and will take part in the AUK Board of Trustees meeting held on campus on Saturday and Sunday, June 21-22. He will be accompanied by the Dartmouth-AUK Relationship Coordinator, Dr. Dale Eickelman, a long-time supporter and consultant to AUK. In May, two other Dartmouth consultants came to AUK for week-long visits. Dr. Ursula Gibson, Professor of Engineering at the Dartmouth Thayer School of Engineering, worked with Dr. Shereef Abu Al-Maati to help finalize AUK plans for introduction of the Computer Engineering program next Fall. Ms. Meredith Braz, the Dartmouth Registrar, assessed the work and needs of the AUK Registrar's office. In the meantime, Dr. Simon O'Meara taught during the Spring semester's 2nd Block in the Dartmouth study-abroad program in Morocco. The Dartmouth internship exchange continues, with one student (John Fine) visiting us this semester, and one AUK student (Sally Saleh) heading to Dartmouth for the summer Rassias program in foreign-language acquisition. The culmination of the five-year collaborative relationship is the renewal of the Dartmouth-AUK Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the new five-year term (2008-2013).

Academic Highlights

The academic highlights of the Spring semester were the Student Showcase (13-14 May) and the Liberal Arts conference (May 10-11), co-sponsored by the Hollings Center for International Dialogue (located in Washington, DC). The theme of the annual conference was "Liberal Arts Education & Tomorrow's Professional." It brought together scholars from several Kuwait institutions and a number of visiting faculty from the Gulf region. AUK is beginning to develop a degree

of recognition for its educational mission among the forward-looking academics in the region.

International Outreach

In recent months, AUK signed general MOU's for future cooperation with Washington State University in Pullman, WA; Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA; and Koc University in Istanbul, Turkey. Next academic

vacancies will be re-advertised. Several staff employees have been upgraded or promoted.

The full AUK Board of Trustees will hold its Spring meeting on June 22, 2008. The BOT Academic Affairs Committee will meet on Saturday, June 21. The June 22 Commencement will be held at the Al-Raya Hall under the patronage of His Ex-

U.S. Institutional (Regional) Accreditation. AUK is pursuing regional U.S. accreditation with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Regional accreditation will enhance the value of the AUK degree and facilitate students' transfer of credits and application to graduate school. NWCCU was selected because of its flexibility, and

creditation in the coming year.

Planning

With the commencement of activity under the Master Plan, the application for American regional accreditation, and the reaffirmation of Kuwaiti accreditation, 2008 is definitely "the year of planning." We are laying the foundations for a culture of planning at AUK, designing a Strategic Plan for 2008-2013 and collaboratively developing the implementation timeline.

Master Plan. The planning documentation for the new campus in Ardhiya with campus design sketches has been submitted to the Council for Private Universities. AUK is in the process of selecting the architectural design company and the project management team and planning the financing of the construction. The development of the new campus and the move to the new facilities are part of the comprehensive Strategic Plan now under development at AUK.

Strategic Plan. The year 2008 is the year for planning the Strategic Plan for 2008-2013 and the first year of the five-year plan implementation timeline. Below are the main points of the Strategic Plan and the planning process that were presented to the AUK Community in March.

Vision:

- Build an institution that delivers internationally recognized academic programs reflecting AUK's mission and values.

Objectives:

- Build a strong, university-wide culture of excellence in education, research, scholarship, and the arts.
- Ensure a university environment that is inclusive as well as diverse and that fosters a spirit of community among faculty, staff, and students.
- Provide an administrative, operational, and physical infrastructure that fully supports a first-class university.
- Serve the needs of Kuwait and the region through outreach and engagement with academia, business, and community partners.

2008-2013 Strategic Plan Major Goals:

Goal One.

Accreditation:

Achieve and maintain local and international institutional and program accreditation.

Goal Two.

Academic Program planning:

- Fully implement currently licensed Undergraduate Arts & Sciences programs;
- Plan and initiate implementation of selected Undergraduate Engineering programs;
- Obtain license and develop plans for selected graduate programs.
- Develop Admissions, Enrollment Management, and Student Success Center plans consistent with Academic Program plans.

Goal Three.

Organizational planning:

- Student Affairs planning
- Facilities planning
- Continuing Education & Outreach planning
- Human Resource Planning
- Financial planning

Strategic Planning Timeline:

Spring 2008 is the time for identifying a steering committee or task force who will lead the strategic planning effort and help develop major plan sub-goals, the time for units/departments to identify their goals for 2008-2013 and to develop timelines for action plans toward achieving those goals. Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Dr. Patricia Read-Hunter, is receiving draft plan proposals from AUK units for information sharing and consolidation into a unified AUK Strategic Plan. Implementation will begin in Fall 2008.



year, we are expecting to host new Fulbright scholars. Tracy Dishongh, a visiting student from Boston University, has completed AUK's first-ever Gulf Studies Certificate. A recent visit by a faculty-led class of Boston College students in Middle Eastern Studies has resulted in a number of faculty and student contacts. Graduating Senior Nadia Karam not only has been accepted into the Harvard summer program, but also obtained funding from Kuwait Fund for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) for her study and travel. Several student groups traveled with faculty for study and competition to Egypt, Germany and France, Harvard, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE. Three Ph.D. students from Virginia Tech will be teaching Summer School at AUK. We are receiving wonderful news about our graduates' acceptance into Master's programs in the UK and USA and plan to provide graduate study information to our seniors on a regular basis beginning next Fall.

Transitions

This semester marks transition at a number of AUK offices. We congratulate Ms. Amna Al-Omare on her appointment as Director of the Library, Dr. Craig Loomis as the new Division Head of the Humanities & Arts, and Dr. James McDougall as the new Director of the Writing Center. Dr. Lisa Urkevich and Dr. Mary Queen are returning to full-time teaching in Music and English, respectively. We thank them for the years of administrative service and look forward to their new achievements in research and in the classroom. Director of the Center for Continuing Education Dave McHardy is leaving AUK and Kuwait; Mohamed Asem is leaving the office of the Registrar, while Bibi AL-Ghanim of the Student Success Center is going to the UK for graduate studies. We wish them all success in their new endeavors. Faculty candidate interviews conducted in Washington, DC in late March have resulted in several offers; regional interviews are continuing, and sev-

cellency Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. It will be attended by the Board members, Dartmouth guests, and a large number of VIPs in addition to our students' families and friends.

Challenges

Segregation. In late March, AUK received the Segregation Directive from the Council for Private Universities that requires us to separate female and male students by the building or wings of buildings at all times. The implications of segregation are numerous and onerous. We immediately need more classrooms and more faculty for those students who previously could be enrolled in mixed-gender sections with segregated seating in the same classroom. This puts a strain on our space, faculty, and financial resources and limits course diversity and upper division course offerings (where enrollment numbers are usually lower). Moreover, some majors with uneven Male/Female breakdown in enrollment numbers may see unfavorable changes in their class dynamics, and may even become unfeasible in the face-to-face delivery mode that is AUK's trademark. If, to overcome faculty shortage, we introduce closed-circuit television, the cost as well as added space requirements will be considerable.

Our students have rejected segregation emphatically and energetically. They have created a committee to articulate their opposition and lobby for a change in the law. AUK has filed a formal objection to the CPU directive because segregation simultaneously increases our costs and distorts our academic mission. However, the outcome of these steps is highly uncertain and in the meantime, the University must follow the law as interpreted by the Council for Private Universities.

Accreditation

Kuwait Accreditation. The CPU Accreditation Committee has completed their review of AUK documentation submitted for re-accreditation. The full Council met on June 15, 2008.

it has been already helpful in providing guidance for our first steps. We started the accreditation process in mid-April by submitting the required *Response to the Requirements for Eligibility*. On July 9, AUK will learn whether it will be invited to submit a "self-study for candidacy" and proceed to the next phase of the regional accreditation process.

Specialized Accreditation. In addition to the 'umbrella' of institutional accreditation, it is possible to seek programmatic, specialized accreditations. These accrediting bodies focus their attention on individual programs within an institution and are closely connected with the professional associations for their respective fields. Their requirements are integrated with the requirements for professional practice, so obtaining specialized accreditation often eases graduates' path to licensure or further study. Such accreditation is not available in all fields. AUK's Intensive English and Business programs have been accepted as candidates for programmatic accreditation. The accreditor selected for the Business programs is the **Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)**, the specialized accreditation association for business education that focuses on teaching excellence. It is recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which affords an additional guarantee of quality. The accreditor selected for the Intensive English Program (IEP) is the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), founded in 1999. CEA is recognized by the US Department of Education and conducts accreditation reviews in the U.S. and internationally. Faculty in both of these programs are now writing their self-studies; the full process, with reviews and site visits, will take approximately 18 months. A few other programs may be considered for international ac-